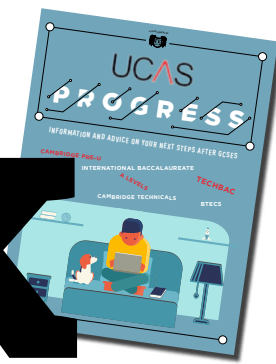




FE Week



FREE WITH THIS ISSUE

A WEEK TO SAVE OUR SECTOR

Dear next Government

You have the chance to offer the FE & skills sector a lifeline.

Having borne cut upon cut, its increasingly desperate voice can be heard in the results of our survey, inside. Please read them.

They will give you some indication of just how a funding cut of 24 per cent is decimating the hopes of college and independent learning provider staff.

They will paint the true picture of despair among providers of education and training who see their funding fall 25 per cent just because the 17-year-olds in their care celebrate their 18th birthday.

This is a sector that can do so much good. It can achieve great things for those who elected you.

It's the route to a skilled and competitive workforce. It offers social mobility.

But it is being brought to its knees by a lack of funding — some might even say a lack of commitment from those in power.

So, having read our survey results once, please read them again. And then act upon them.

Do this to ensure the nation's skills base is not further eroded. Do this so those who simply want a chance to improve their lot in life through education can do just that.

Don't squander this lifeline.

Chris Henwood
Editor, FE Week

Read the results of the FE Week 2015 FE and Skills Survey on **pages 4 to 7**



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EDITION 136

FE WEEK TEAM

Editor:	Chris Henwood
Head designer:	Nicky Phillips
Designer:	Rob Galt
Sub editor:	Paul Offord
Reporters:	Freddie Whittaker
	Rebecca Cooney
	Billy Camden
Photographer:	Ellis O'Brien
Financials:	Helen Neilly
	Victoria Boyle
Sales manager:	Hannah Smith
Sales executive:	Jasmin Fergus-Aghamiri
Administration:	Frances Ogefere Dell
Contributors:	Mick Fletcher
	Shane Chowen
	Ruth Sparkes
	Dame Asha Kemka

Managing director: Shane Mann

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**Learning & Skills Events,
Consultancy and Training Ltd**
161-165 Greenwich High Road
London SE10 8JA
T: 020 8123 4778
E: news@feweek.co.uk

NEWS

EXAM PAPERS ‘COULD BE LOST’
AFTER ‘TECHNICAL ERROR’

@FCDWHITTAKER
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A “technical error” in collecting Functional Skills papers has left learners across the country unsure whether their City & Guilds exam papers have been lost.

The glitch was said to be in the scanning equipment of un-named contractor, which meant papers were not uploaded to the marking system.

City & Guilds has ordered the contractor to rescan every single paper, but admitted originals may have been lost. It was not clear how many learners were affected.

N&B Training Ltd, based in Guildford, Surrey, is among the providers affected and is waiting for the results of around 40 Functional Skills maths, English and ICT tests taken by learners between January and March.

Sam Clark, owner, said: “We do not know if any papers submitted after March have been lost.

“We have been given all sorts of excuses from City & Guilds as to why we haven’t received the results yet. These range from changes in their policies and procedures; they have employed new markers and a whole cacophony of other excuses.

“Some of the results we are waiting for are for learners on our EFA study programmes. These are vulnerable learners for whom it was traumatic enough to sit the exams first time around. It will be devastating to have to tell them their papers have been lost and they need to sit



the exams again.”

City & Guilds UK managing director Kirstie Donnelly (pictured below) apologised for the problem.

“I am deeply sorry for the difficulties and concerns this has caused our customers and our learners — many of whom I’ve been talking to over the past few days,” she said.

“I can reassure all of our customers that we are working extremely closely with our supplier to resolve this situation as quickly as possible.”

She said City & Guilds started using a new marking system for paper-based Functional Skills tests in January and had noticed a delay in results getting to providers by the end of the following, sparking an investigation.

She said: “Unfortunately, what became clear was that there had been a technical error in the supplier’s scanning system. This resulted in some papers not being uploaded into the marking system, which is why some results were delayed leading to concerns over missing scripts.

“At this stage, we cannot give a final figure because we’ve requested that our supplier rescan every single paper they have received. This way, we will be able to reconcile how many papers, if any, are permanently lost.”

Ms Donnelly said a number of papers had since been found, but that City & Guilds would work with providers to set up re-sits for those whose tests did not turn up.

City & Guilds said its online tests – which made up the majority of its Functional Skills offering – were unaffected.

Row breaks out over quals funding email claims

@REBECCAKCOONEY
REBECCA.COONEY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A bitter row has broken out between two awarding organisations (AOs) over claims one had “lost” public funding for its qualifications.

OCN London has hit out at an NOCN email claiming OCN London’s 24 qualifications approved for 2015/16 meant it had “lost funding”.

The number of qualifications approved was confirmed by OCN London, but it was unclear whether it had sought approval for more.

However, OCN London chief executive Jacquie Mutter (pictured) told *FE Week* the claim OCN London had lost funding was “completely inappropriate behaviour” with another round of applications for 2015/16 yet to close.

The NOCN email, signed by managing director Graham Hasting-Evans and sent to providers last month, was entitled “Are your adult qualifications funded? They could be with NOCN”.

It was sent to *FE Week* by NOCN, which won Skills Funding Agency (SFA) approval for 152 adult



qualifications for next academic year.

The email said: “The SFA catalogue shows many other AOs have lost funding for their qualifications.”

OCN London claims to be a member of the Open College Network of AOs, overseen by NOCN, however the email went on to list a number of “former OCNs” which, it said, were funded for fewer qualifications each. The list included OCN London.

The email added: “If you’ve been using qualifications from these organisations for your courses, you might now struggle to get adequate provision unless you move to an alternative supplier, such as NOCN.”

An NOCN spokesperson said: “This year the SFA has reduced the number of qualifications it is funding.

“NOCN has succeeded in getting 152 qualifications funded for 2015/16 but many other AOs have lost funding.

“And so it is inevitable colleges and other training providers will move provision to awarding organisations that have had their qualifications funded.”

Under new SFA rules, AOs had an opportunity to submit applications for qualifications to attract public funding before

FE WEEK NEWS IN BRIEF
FE loans approach 60k

The total number of processed applications for 24+ advanced learning loans throughout the whole of March was 2,220, bringing the total number for 2014/15 to 53,910.

The figure for March was 19 per cent up on the 1,864 applications processed during the same month last year.

However, the total number for this academic year so far (53,910) is 1.6 per cent down on the 54,777 applications that had been processed from the start of 2013/14 up to the end of March last year.

Grade one Thomas Cook

The training arm of travel agents Thomas Cook has been rated outstanding across the headline fields by Ofsted.

The report on hospitality sector Trailblazer Thomas Cook Group UK Limited, which was training 251 travel services apprentices at the time of inspection, was published on Thursday (April 30). The report praised the “exceptional” progress of the company’s apprenticeship programme, which was allocated £1.1m of government funding for 2014/15.

Thomas Cook was given a grade two rating when it was previously inspected in 2009.

Tough new targets

Strict new delivery targets imposed by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) came into force this month.

Under the SFA’s new tolerance levels, providers more than 3 per cent below their contract target could face an in-year reduction in their funding. The tolerance level was 5 per cent this time last year.

The new levels were launched at the beginning of the academic year despite warnings from the Association of Colleges that their application could cause “financial instability”.

NEWS

Sector politicians are all bookies' favourites



REBECCA COONEY & BILLY CAMDEN
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

These are the political faces we've come to know in the world of FE and skills — but how likely are we to see them in the sector again after the General Election?

The good news for our current MPs is, at time of going to press, bookmaker William Hill said they were all odds-on favourites to win their constituencies.

But that doesn't mean they can relax — other candidates are hot on their heels, and of course there's no guarantee they'll take up FE and skills posts after the election even if they do win.

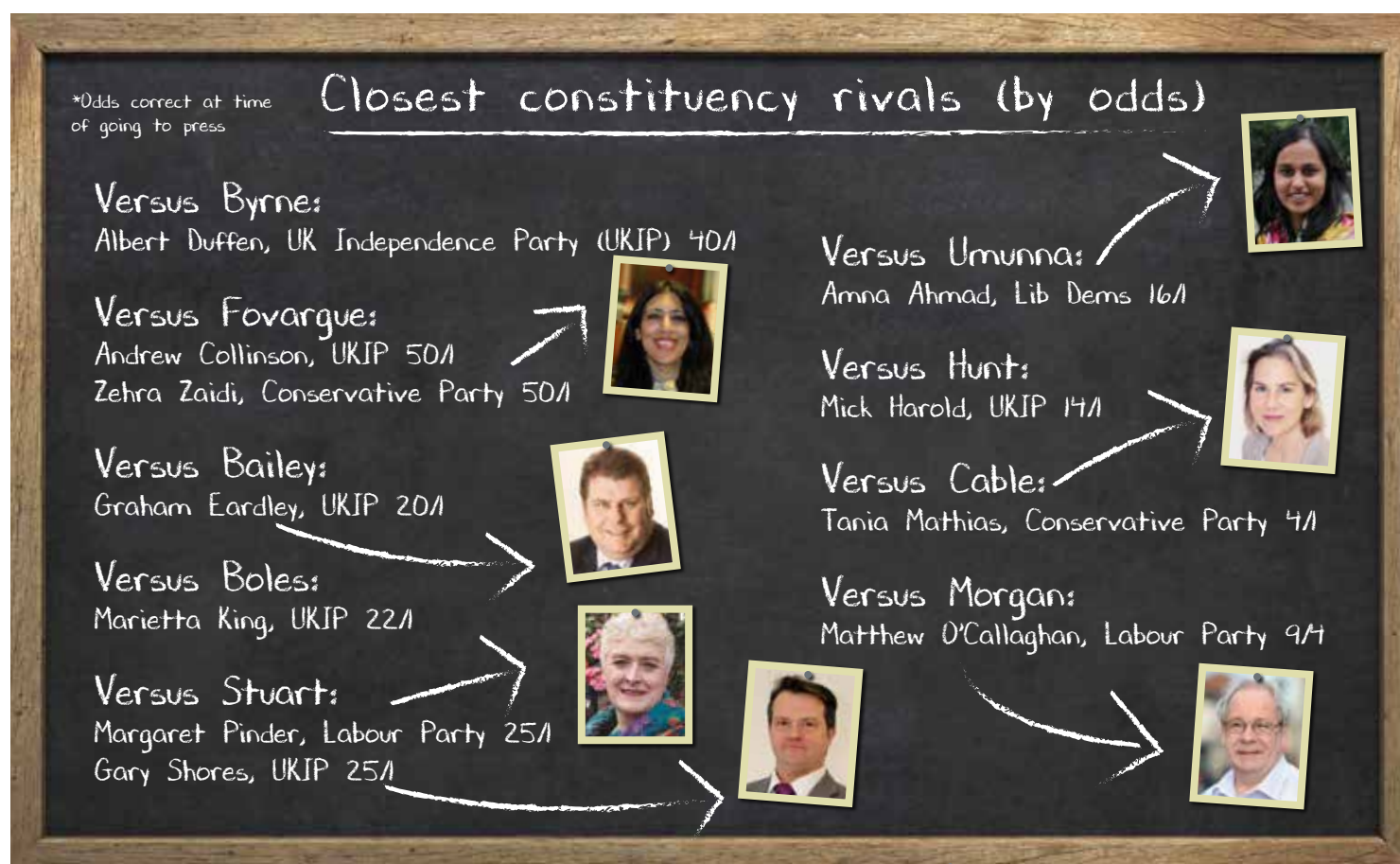
Most likely to keep their seats in the Commons, according to the bookies, are Shadow Skills Minister Liam Byrne, MP for Birmingham Hodge Hill, and Shadow Junior Education Minister Yvonne Fovargue, MP for Makerfield, both with odds of 1/200.

Both won their seats with large margins in 2010, with Mr Byrne winning by a majority of 10,302 votes and Ms Fovargue with 12,490.

Next we have Skills Minister Nick Boles seeking re-election in Grantham and Stamford on the back of a 14,826 majority last time, Shadow Business Secretary Chuka Umunna, MP for Streatham, with a 3,259 majority, Education Select Committee chair Graham Stuart, in Beverly and Holderness (majority 12,987), and Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee chair Adrian Bailey (majority 5,651), fighting West Bromwich West. They are all priced at 1/100.

Behind them, Shadow Education Secretary

Top row, from left: Liam Byrne at NewVic, Yvonne Fovargue at Makerfield apprentice employers Lilac Lettings, Adrian Bailey at Sandwell College Middle row, from left: Nick Boles with an apprentice at the House of Commons, Graham Stuart with an apprentice accountant in Beverley, Chuka Umunna at Nelson and Colne College. Bottom row, from left: Tristram Hunt at South Staffordshire College, Vince Cable with a Ferrari apprentice in London, and Nicky Morgan with apprentices at Lime Tree Nursery in Loughborough



Tristram Hunt has odds of 1/66 of keeping his Stoke-on-Trent Central seat where he enjoys a 5,565 majority. Looking slightly less comfortable are Business Secretary Vince Cable and Education Secretary Nicky Morgan.

Dr Cable, who had a 2010 majority of 12,140, is still favourite to win in his Twickenham constituency but has shorter odds of 1/8. Ms Morgan, meanwhile has odds of 1/3 to win following a 2010 majority of 3,744.

So who are the favourites for next Business or Education Secretary? Wisely, William Hill said with such a high chance of another coalition, and so many possible line-ups, the odds were impossible to calculate.

The sector speaks in



@FCDWHITTAKER
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Funding, change, workload and bureaucracy topped the list of concerns in the second annual *FE Week* sector survey.

Worries about English and maths teaching and the “broad direction of travel” for FE followed close behind as hundreds took the opportunity to express their feelings on FE and skills with the General Election just days away.

And sector leaders have backed the results, using them to call for support and action from the party, or parties, that emerge victorious from Thursday May 7’s vote.

Among them was 157 Group executive director Dr Lynne Sedgmore (pictured below), who said the sector was “at something of a turning point”, and that concern over the ‘broad direction of travel’ (90 per cent concerned) and the rate and volume of change (90.2 per cent concerned) was “very understandable”.

She told *FE Week*: “I would urge the next government to learn from experiences with the schools sector and engage much more meaningfully in a dialogue with those of us delivering FE on the ground before imposing yet more top-down initiatives.”

Dr Sedgmore said she was reassured that responses on issues like loans and English and maths demonstrated the sector “understood the importance of making those initiatives with which we all agree work”, but added that it remained “important that we are given time to make them work before being judged as underperforming”.

She added: “Concerns about the future direction of Ofsted are perhaps a reflection of the strongly-held belief of many that we are increasingly being



The Sixth Form

held to account for societal problems which are not of our own making.

“The clear message is that we understand what is being asked of us, but that policy — and funding — must match up to the aspirational rhetoric in reality if we are to have the world-class skills system we all want. It is concerning that fears around staff turnover may indicate that many are choosing to leave rather than face the very real challenges of the future.”

David Hughes (pictured below right), chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (Niace), said he was saddened by the results, which he said showed the sector did not feel as “confident and supported” as it should.

He said: “Over half of those surveyed are extremely concerned about the ‘broad government ‘direction of travel’ for FE and skills’ and three quarters are extremely concerned about levels of funding. That weight of feeling does not suggest a healthy position for FE and we need to fight to improve it.”

He said Niace was among the organisations calling for funding cuts in FE to stop and repeated his call for a commission to agree a long-term ‘settlement’ for the sector, a call which he said was backed up by the survey results.

He added: “I believe that the next government has a once in a generation opportunity to set out a more positive and clear vision for how the learning, skills and employment needs of the country will be met.

“The productivity deficit, technological change and an ageing population all require more people to continue to learn and develop. Our current system is not geared to deliver that and this survey shows why not. I hope that politicians, civil servants and advisers all read this and pay heed.”



Director of education and skills policy at the Association of Colleges (AoC)

Survey issues ring true for AoC

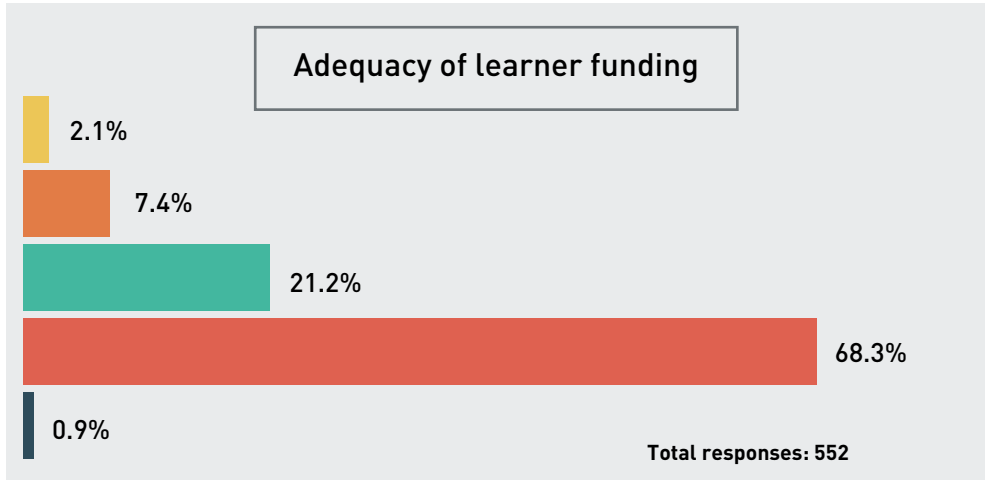
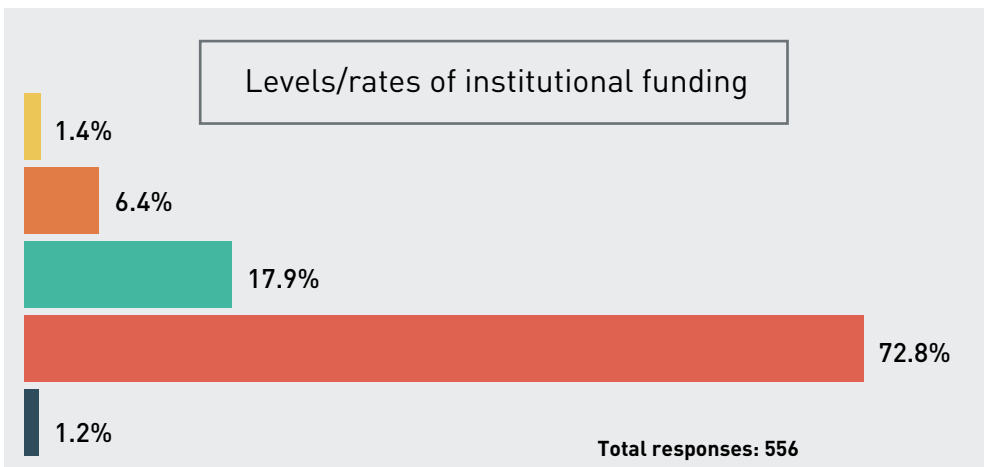
recognised, and it is encouraging that Labour and the Liberal Democrats have pledged to ring-fence funding from 0 to 19.

We would like to see education funding put on a more rational and stable footing and that’s why we are calling for the next government of whatever hue to prioritise a

once-in-a-generation funding review of how money is spent at each stage of education to ensure we can adequately educate and train all children and young people.

Colleges are also dealing with increased enrolments of young people who have failed to achieve grade A* to C in English and maths

Level of concern for the following issues:



Key

- Not at all concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Extremely concerned
- Moderately concerned
- N/A or I have no view on this

Colleges’ Association (SFCA) has also called for action on funding in response to the survey results.

James Kewin, SFCA deputy chief executive, said: “It is striking that 89 per cent of respondents were either moderately or extremely concerned about the adequacy of learner funding. Adequacy is the key word here — while the government maintains that

it is funding sixth formers to study on a full time basis, there is a big difference between the way the Department for Education defines full time study for funding purposes and the reality of what a full time education actually involves.”

He said students were increasingly receiving “a part time educational experience” and warned this could become

GCSE after 11 years of schooling.

Supporting students who have previously failed these qualifications is not easy as specialist teaching staff are needed to motivate them which all requires funding. Two thirds of respondents to the survey said they were concerned about the number of maths and English teachers available.

However, this funding is dependent on students being able to achieve at least a C grade and more needs to be done to support colleges in recruiting and training additional teachers. There is no quick fix to the maths and English challenge. GCSEs need to be rigorous qualifications, but some young people will never be able to achieve this.

The next government should work with employers and colleges to develop new maths and English qualifications which are related to the world of work and everyday life.

The concerns of the FE sector highlighted in the 2015 *FE Week* FE and skill survey chime with the issues raised in the AoC manifesto for colleges.

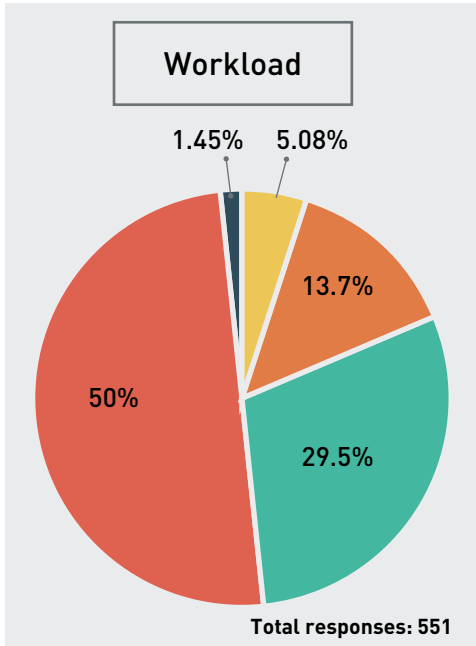
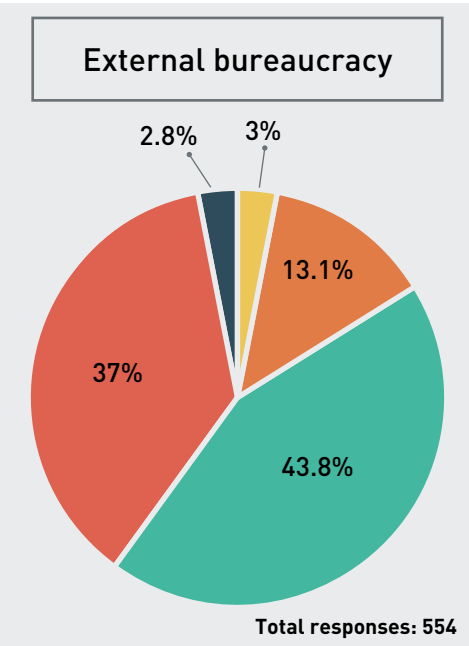
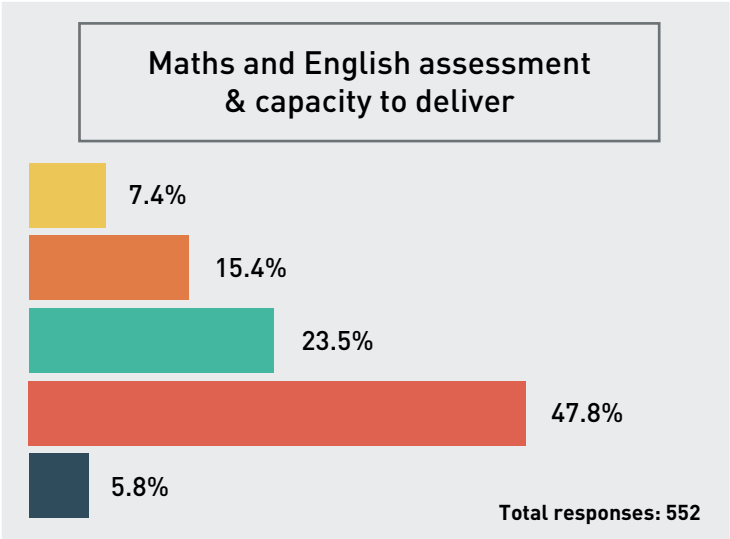
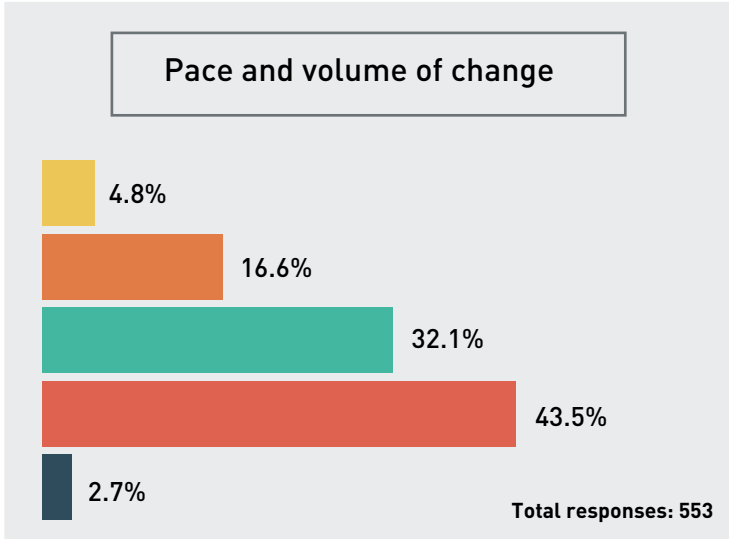
It is not surprising that 90 per cent of respondents were concerned about funding — both for educational institutions and for individual students.

We have seen a 24 per cent cut for adult education announced in the last year on top of significant cuts throughout the last Parliament. Colleges are being forced to make tough decisions about the future.

Following such severe cuts and the changes we have seen in policy from the previous government over the past year, many are worried about the direction of travel for the next administration.

At the AoC, we have been lobbying hard to ensure the importance and value of FE is

nd says funding is chief issue



the norm without an urgent review of education funding.

He added: “The survey also shows there is deep concern about the funding of students with high needs. We share this concern, and believe that returning responsibility for funding to the EFA and removing the role of local authorities would be a helpful first step on the road to getting a better deal for these

young people that need it most.”

Kevin Gilmartin, colleges specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), said members had been “battling with the inadequacy of 16 to 18 funding” for a number of years and had led a national campaign to highlight the issue.

He added: “Indeed, the April council has just agreed policy to campaign for the

quantum per learner for core funding post-16 to be increased from the existing £4,000 to £4,800.

“It is to be hoped that the incoming government listens very carefully to the funding concerns of the FE and post-16 sector, as articulated by ASCL and its other professional partners.”

He said levels of funding per learner “must be increased to an adequate level” in order to produce the “world-class educational and training sector for which we all strive”, adding: “The sector has the passion, skills and expertise to produce this — but it needs the government to give it the basic tools for the job.”

The survey results also sparked concerns among the University and College Union (UCU) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL).

Sally Hunt, UCU general secretary, said the survey results made it clear that staff in FE were under “a great deal of strain”.

She added: “It is clear from the survey that staff in further education are under a great deal of strain. 50 per cent of staff are extremely concerned about workload and there are also

apprehension about the pace of change and the ability to retain staff within the sector.

“The findings reinforce the importance of the workload challenge for FE for identifying and addressing specific concerns in terms of workload.”

Ms Hunt said the survey also raised concerns about new English and maths requirements, and said staff needed support in this “crucial” area.

She said: “Once again, though, the overriding concern for staff is the level of institutional funding, and this uncertainty has only been compounded by the massive budget cuts announced for adult learning in 2015/16.

“The next government urgently needs to review the funding situation for FE and ensure that proper investment is made.”

Dr Mary Bousted, general secretary of the ATL, said: “The FE sector has been devastated by the cuts imposed by the coalition government, so it is no surprise this survey reveals funding is of the highest concern to respondents.”

She added that the survey results revealed the “dire impact” of inadequate funding on learners, and that staff were seeing a decline in training opportunities as a result of cuts.

She said: “These responses indicate staff are also seeing a decline in training opportunities as a result of austerity cuts to the FE sector, further undermining their professionalism and limiting their ability to pass on up-to-date skills and knowledge to students.

“Respondents echoed ATL’s view regarding workload; that staff are steadily being run into the ground, as well as revealing many of the other fundamental flaws currently dogging the education sector.

“We need to take heed of these warnings because they reflect the sector’s capacity to deliver crucial skills to the economy and wider opportunities to local communities.”



STEWART SEGAL

Chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP)

‘We need stability to cope with less funding in a time of higher quality benchmarks’

The *FE Week* survey reflects many of the issues that we have included in our own manifesto, which we issued back in 2013.

The overall concern is that the reducing budgets and higher quality benchmarks mean that we need a period of stability under the next government so that providers can drive improvements to delivery while funding

continues to be a major challenge.

Providers welcome change, but it has to be done in a consistent and predictable policy environment. Around two thirds (65 per cent) of the survey’s respondents were either moderately concerned or extremely concerned that we won’t have enough English and maths teachers in our sector, so political ambitions

in respect of GCSE attainment should be tempered accordingly unless backed with significant investment.

We all know that we need to improve the teaching of English and maths, but the policy on issues like Functional Skills must be consistent and supportive. English and maths has been one area of focus in recent Ofsted inspections and the survey echoes provider concerns about the overall inspection regime since the start of the year. Another common inspection framework arrives in September — only two years after the last one.

When you look at the survey’s findings on the lack of confidence in the reliability of inspectors’ findings and match this to the fact that there will be a difficult transition to the new framework, we need to ensure that Ofsted and the government are aware of the impact of these constant changes.

The complexity of the sector’s offer is identified as a significant concern and we know that it is one shared by employers. This is why for non-classroom provision, the AELP believes that future skills and employment provision should be focused on apprenticeships, traineeships, English and maths and programmes for the unemployed.

Making sure that more young people in particular know about these opportunities remains a major task and the survey shows that providers believe that much needs to be done to improve information, advice and guidance. If the next government makes the commitment to work with the sector, then we hope that next year’s survey will show an improvement in measures such as the direction of travel of policy where 70 per cent of respondents are concerned and rates of funding where 72 per cent are extremely concerned.

‘Sector virtually unsustainable’

If the data from our 2015 survey painted a less than positive picture, then comments added by respondents to some of the questions offered little in the way of hope.

Here are some of the hardest-hitting statements submitted by some of the 723 respondents to our survey. They were picked from answers in areas ranked highest in terms of levels of concern.

We also have responses to the survey results from representatives of the main three political parties, particularly pertinent as we head into the final countdown for what looks to be one of the closest elections in history. Do any of them convince you that their policies might answer the issues raised by our survey?

“My concerns are that we devalue the qualifications that we have tried so hard over the past few years to implement due to the scale of the changes that are proposed. This is possibly most prevalent with the proposed changes to functional skills”

“The squeeze on funding means we are close to not being able to deliver a programme of learning to our community. Excessive bureaucracy with the resulting paperwork trail and systems is unsustainable with reduced staffing and further staffing cuts to come”

“The turbulence in the system is a major concern – funding and qualifications changing at the same time, with little time for planning and preparation. We would be better divorcing the design of curriculum from government and learning from countries that have greater stability in their education systems”

“Ofsted are part of the problem as their ridiculous ever changing requirements prevent SMT from concentrating on running the college and focussing on the right things”

“Current funding level makes this sector virtually unsustainable, I foresee college closures and failures as a direct result of funding cuts”

“Apprenticeship funding reforms are very concerning putting off SMEs engaging due to mandatory cash contribution”

“As an independent provider (and yet not-for-profit) we’ve been denied access to capital for investment for years. Now this has been handed over to the LEPs and due to their inefficiency we have again missed out on any opportunity to bid for capital in either 15/16 or 16/17”

“There should be a new modernisation fund from government to support each college with the level and kinds of change expected of the sector”

“Over sufficiency of some types of 16 to 18 provision particularly school sixth form A-level provision, increased competition and declining demographic together with changes to funding gives cause for serious concern regarding financial viability of some provision”



MATTHEW HANCOCK
Business Minister (and former Skills Minister) and Conservative candidate for West Suffolk


Making sure that every young person has the skills they need to get a good job has been the driving force of the Conservatives in government.

The FE sector has worked incredibly hard to reform and work within challenging budgets.

Together we’ve created 2.2m more apprenticeships, reformed qualifications, driven up standards and put employers at the heart of FE.

We want to end long term youth unemployment once and for all — we’ll do whatever it takes. By 2020, a Conservative government will create 3m more apprenticeships and help record numbers of young people move off benefits and into work.

This is all part of a goal shared by all in FE: to give everyone the opportunity to reach their potential.




LIAM BYRNE
Shadow Skills Minister and Labour candidate for Birmingham Hodge Hill

It’s no wonder that those working in FE have big concerns about institutional funding.

The Tories have spent five years hollowing out the sector and our colleges have paid the price. Labour has a better plan for FE that puts colleges at the heart of our plan for skills.

We will protect the entire education budget, including 16 to 19 education, so that it rises in line with inflation — that’s worth an extra £400m by 2018/19.

And we’ve got big ambitions for colleges with our plans to turn the best ones into institutes of technical education to deliver high-level skills and vital links with industry.



DR VINCE CABLE
Business Secretary and Liberal Democrat candidate for Twickenham

The FE sector has performed admirably well over the last five years, delivering more with less money.

I have tried to prioritise that sector as a Minister in government and to prevent some of the devastating cuts that the Tories would have imposed had we not been there to stop them.

It has been tough for many sectors but the cuts the FE sector has had to endure much less than some other parts of government and I have made a priority of protecting some budgets such as the adult community learning.

I also welcome the incredible work the sector has done to deliver the massive growth in apprenticeships — this will continue to be a focus for the Lib Dems in the next parliament.

Top 10 areas of concern					
	Moderately/extremely	Slightly/somewhat	Not at all	NA/no view	Total
Levels/rates of institutional funding	505	36	8	7	556
Adequacy of learner funding	494	41	12	5	552
External bureaucracy	448	73	17	16	554
Workload	439	76	28	8	551
Pace and volume of change	419	92	27	15	553
Maths and English assessment/capacity to deliver	394	85	41	32	552
Broad government 'direction of travel' for FE	388	104	24	32	548
Pay and conditions	381	108	48	14	551
Complexity of the offer	375	109	38	28	550
Motivation	373	109	60	9	551
Specialist teachers e.g. English, maths, voc subjects	372	91	56	26	545

Bottom 10 areas of concern					
	Moderately/extremely	Slightly/somewhat	Not at all	NA/no view	Total
Range and quality of employer contacts	172	203	90	84	549
Diversity of workforce	171	157	193	27	548
Getting govts/board members/trustees sufficiently involved	160	169	97	122	548
Retention/maintenance and churn of employer contacts	159	214	82	91	546
Quality of stewardship and challenge	149	179	87	133	548
Training	138	220	77	113	548
Partnerships with other govt and non-govt organisations	136	239	89	81	545
Diversity of governors/board members/trustees	131	183	103	130	547
Partnerships with other ed/training sectors, providers, bodies	129	233	109	76	547
Partnerships with contractors or sub-contractors	129	207	103	104	543

More analysis of ‘successful’ survey on way

A full report on the findings of the *FE Week* annual FE and Skills survey is due to be released later this month.

Policy Consortium, the *FE Week* research partner for the survey, will publish detailed analysis of the findings by its panel of experts on May 11.

The report will be available on both the *FE Week* and Policy Consortium websites.

“Another year and another hugely successful *FE Week* annual survey — our second — has laid bare the feelings of those within the sector about what is happening to FE and skills,” said *FE Week* editor Chris Henwood.

“My sincere thanks go to everyone who took the time to make their opinions known. Just like this newspaper, it is something that simply could not happen without the support of our readers, and it should now go without saying that the survey will be back again next year.”

The survey opened on February 26, and respondents were able to give their views until March 24.

The results of the prize draw, with prizes of an iPad Air and an *FE Week* subscription, will be announced before the end of May.



MICK FLETCHER

Mick Fletcher is a founder member of the Policy Consortium, a director of RCU Ltd, a visiting research fellow at the Institute of Education, University of London, and a regular contributor to the *FE Week* Experts section

Less than half saying funding was biggest issue for cash-starved sector is telling for severity of other concerns

What does it say about the health of the FE and skills sector if funding is the “single biggest issue” for just 44 per cent of those who responded to the survey question, asks Mick Fletcher.

The first headline finding from the Policy Consortium / *FE Week* survey of the sector in 2015 was a big surprise. Respondents were asked to identify “the biggest single issue affecting FE and Skills”. Out of all the answers received 44 per cent — under half — were concerned with funding. Given what is going on in the sector at the moment this figure seems surprisingly low and requires some investigation. Colleges and other providers are facing a cut of around 24 per cent in their adult skills budget. Rates for 16 to 19 funding are frozen. Support for older students is being switched from grant to loan despite disappointing take-up. And government is ploughing on with its policy of transferring skills funding to employers despite evidence from the

employer ownership pilots that it doesn’t work and evidence from the apprenticeship funding consultation that employers don’t want it. What on earth is going on? The first thought was that the sample might be seriously unrepresentative. Perhaps it was only those in quiet and protected corners of the sector who had the time to fill in the on-line questionnaire; all the rest were too busy cutting classes and sacking their colleagues to notice. That doesn’t seem to be true, however. While we are not claiming statistical precision for the survey the 723 people who did respond appear to be a broad cross section of the sector. About half of them described themselves as managers, further 10 per cent as chief executives, 20 per cent administrative or support staff and 10 per cent tutors or lecturers. About two thirds were from colleges with others coming from training providers, community learning, local government and

support agencies. About half had been in the sector for 13 years or more so were well able to put today’s cuts in context. The second hypothesis was that people are really not as concerned about funding as recent commentary has suggested. Perhaps it is only those paid to speak for sector bodies and lobby groups who are making a fuss; those at the ‘chalk face’ just accept retrenchment and cuts in service as part of the job. Once again however this explanation doesn’t stack up. When asked specifically about funding rates just under three quarters described themselves as ‘extremely concerned’. Nine out of ten people in this cross section of the sector said that they were either extremely or moderately concerned — a 5 percentage point increase on last year’s already elevated level. And in case anyone thinks the sample included only ‘moaning minnies’ who would be extremely concerned about anything, the answers to other questions don’t bear that out. Only a quarter for example were ‘extremely concerned’ about discretionary support funds despite all the pressures on that budget. The comments people made explaining their concerns were also revealing. Unlike last year when most comments revolved around particular aspects of provision many people this year expressed fears about systemic failure, perceived threats to the viability of institutions, to adult learning as a whole or to FE as we have known it. The explanation for this initially

surprising set of answers has to be that although most people are very concerned about funding they are even more concerned about other things that are going on.

What must be the worst funding settlement for any sector of education for some time should be seen as a benchmark for the concerns expressed about other aspects of the current context

What must be the worst funding settlement for any sector of education for some time should be seen as a benchmark for the concerns expressed about other aspects of the current context.

They include government priorities, mentioned in 16 per cent of responses as of greater concern than funding, concerns about the status of the sector, about curriculum reform, arrangements for inspection and quality and the ability to meet local needs.

TOP GENERAL ELECTION TWEETS

@Stockdalej: The note comes out again... And again sounds like #apprenticeships are one of the key solutions for everything under the conservatives...

@tomchapman16: Youth unemployment down, 2 million apprenticeships & more low-income students going to uni. Conservatives have stood up for young people.

@ianrmillard: "Conservatives" promise (threaten?) to create 50,000 more (virtually unpaid, mostly fake) "apprenticeships". Vote-winner or vote-loser?#bbcdp

@pmacbrum: @Conservatives Please tell how many of the jobs are zero hours/ apprenticeships paying less than minimum wage/jobs leaving people on welfare?

@Emp3docles: So very True, those promised 200,000 new apprenticeships by the Conservatives are going to be doing what?

@TomPettinger: @Sam_Jackson94 you'll note Labour have an (admirable) pledge about providing apprenticeships. Having previously said all should go to uni...

@rosie4westlancs: Under Labour we will help young people by expanding apprenticeships and offering a guaranteed job or training

@blazetg: @TristramHuntMP what about funding for young people who don't want apprenticeships? Will Labour reverse the planned 24% cut in FE funding?

@Brodie_Wattam: How can labour guarantee apprenticeships for every school leaver? Isn't it the businesses who agree to this ?? #ridiculous

@Kate4Blackburn: I want to see increased opportunities for the young people of #Blackburn including more training + apprenticeships #KateforBlackburn #Labour

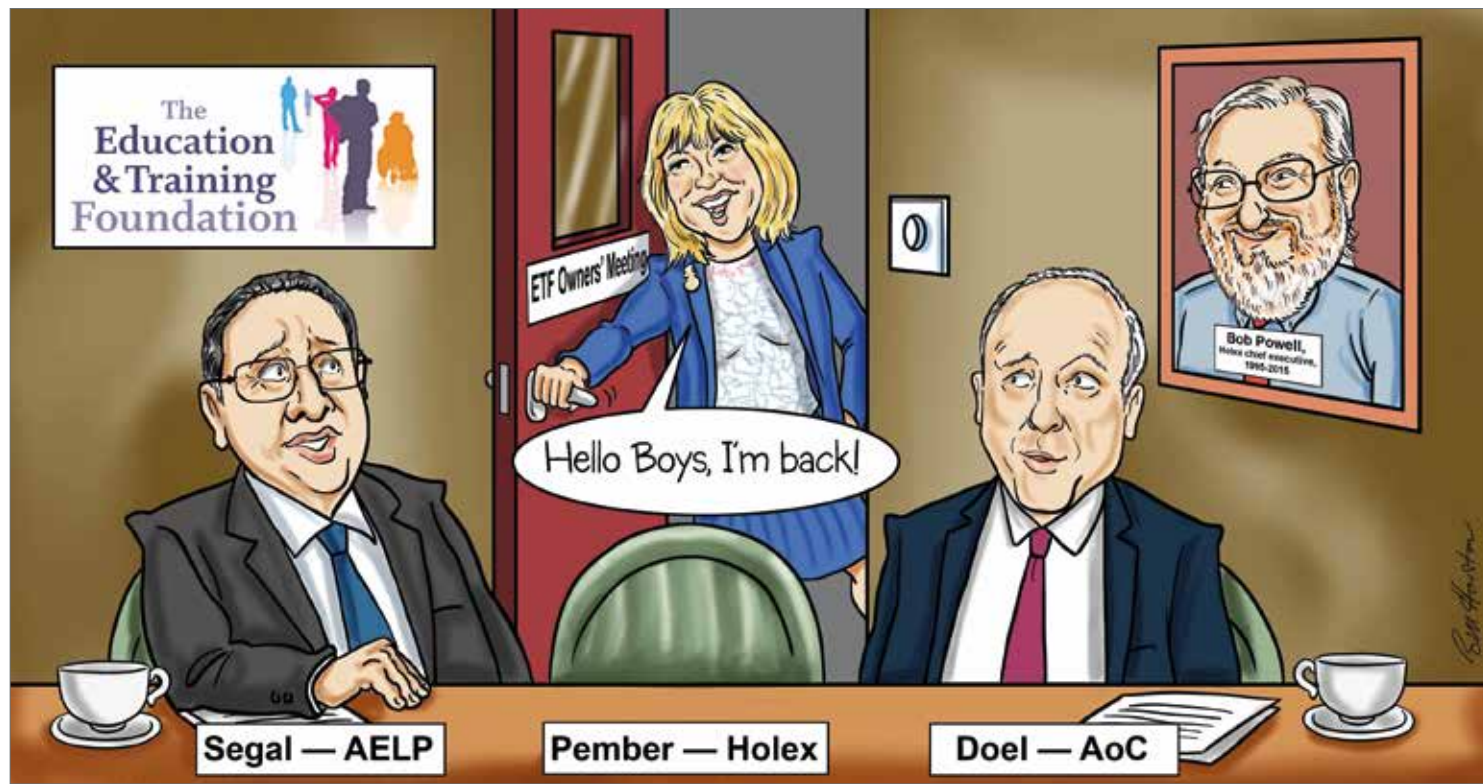
@PaulKenLD: Tory leaflets don't mention @libdems tax cut, @dannyalalexander cutting deficit, @vincecable 2m apprenticeships @hjoneshojo @JohnLeatherhead

@markpack: Record number of apprenticeships: just one of the #LibDems achievements in the last five years <http://bit.ly/1J9kSK6>

@LibDems: @nick_clegg rattling off #libdems successes on #CallClegg: apprenticeships, equal marriage, shared parental leave, free school meals & more

@FWDtweets: #Apprenticeships getting very political - The Lib Dems would allow businesses hiring apprentices under 25 to not pay N.I. contributions.

@mikeymikedoha: @nick_clegg @swilliamsmp @LibDems 2 million ? There appear to be 851,000 apprenticeships - what might explain the discrepancy in figures ?



Dr Pember in return to FE and skills leadership role

@REBECCA COONEY
REBECCA.COONEY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Former Whitehall FE and skills chief and resident *FE Week* agony aunt Dr Sue Pember is set for a return to sector leadership.

The former senior civil servant, who worked with 10 FE and skills ministers and eight secretaries of state over six years up to 2013, will head up adult learning provider membership body Hoxex from August.

She takes over from Hoxex founder Bob Powell (pictured), who is retiring as chief officer after 20 years in the role.

"Bob has done a remarkable job — I'm a bit scared to follow in his footsteps," she said.

She added: "This sector does wonderful work with adults in many different and often difficult settings and they continue to have a presence in the most poor and disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

"They are innovative, have an impressive skills base and community reach, so they are well placed to take on the new localism agenda."

The chief officer job will be split in two, with Dr Pember taking on the bulk of the role as director of policy and external relations while Mr Powell's administrative responsibilities will be divided among other staff.

Dr Pember, who got an OBE in 2000 for services to education, said: "I am delighted to be taking on this role in these challenging and exciting times."

One of her roles will involve oversight of the Education and Training Foundation, with Hoxex one of its owners along with the Association of Colleges and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.

Mr Powell is expected to continue occasional duties throughout autumn 2015 to complete existing externally-funded projects.

Mr Powell said Dr Pember would be able to offer "new perspectives on the organisation's work".

"I can think of no-

one more suited to take on this role as a key part of the team charged with taking Hoxex forward," he said.

"Sue's appointment brings both a breadth of experience and a depth of understanding that I am confident will stand Hoxex in good stead.

"I have every confidence that Hoxex member organisations will go forward into this new future with a refreshed impetus, a clear vision and justifiable enthusiasm."

Hoxex chair Barbara Holm, said Dr Pember's "significant experience both in Whitehall and as a leading provider manager ensures we will be able to engage fully in policy debate".

"Sue will lead for us in our dealings with government, stakeholders and other organisations and will be responsible for keeping colleagues at Hoxex member organisations up to speed with national developments," she added.

Dr Pember is expected to begin meeting with practitioners and managers from across the adult learning sector before taking up the post, to ensure a smooth transition.



COMMENTS

Third of Intraining workforce hit as 450 jobs set for axe

What the politicians seem to be forgetting is that it is not just the impact of the massive job losses across the sector but also the impact of those job losses on learners. The UK economy may well be in some recovery however, we are currently propagating the next recession of massive proportions. The current cuts are actually delivering the jobless of the future as more and more young people and adults alike are not getting the training they need to fill the skills gaps of the future.

Every pound lost from FE today will cut ten times that amount from future growth prospects of the country as a whole.

Apprenticeships currently seem the panacea of all parties. Be warned the big boys have had their pickings and the system

will soon return to reliance on the much more sustainable SME and sole traders. The sad thing is the amount of change upon change and poor management will have scared them so much they will resist. If you want my vote to be a leader then Lead for tomorrow don't just manage it today??

Alan Green

Takeover agreed for A4e to create 'biggest' Work Programme contractor

So Emma Harrison scores another £20m to add to the £9m she paid herself in 2012, on top of her six-figure salary. All thanks to generous handouts of taxpayers money. Meanwhile the people her company was supposed to help are queuing up at the food bank. Not right is it?

Peter Talbot

Good for her. She has been hounded by people for building a successful company that helped people. There were a few rotten apples that committed fraud, they were dealt with. A4E were cleared of running a deliberate structural fraud, she was cleared of having any involvement.

A4E were paid the same as any other organisation for their outcomes, the fact they did it on a scale and successfully which resulted in a profit is not a crime.

She faced the critics, resigned her public position and has worked to repair the company reputation and saved the jobs of her employees.

I wish her the best ...

A Green

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Eight FE and skills ideas that ran out

As the dawn of a new government with the possibility of a raft of new policies approaches, former FE lecturer, press officer and communications manager Anne Nicholls considers some policies of old and asks whether they're best left in the past, or ripe for reconsideration.



Folks in the Westminster education and skills bubble have oft been accused of “collective amnesia”.

In its November report *Sense and Instability* City and Guilds revealed how many of today’s policies were simply old ones recycled. But with 61 secretaries of state responsible for skills over the past 30 years it’s hardly surprising that there is little continuity.

Those of us who have been around in the sector for longer than two decades are suffering from an acute case of déjà vu.

As yet another “new” policy initiative jumps on the FE merry-go-round sending the whole sector into a tail spin, are we seeing a rerun of Groundhog Day?

I have worked in FE, intermittently, for nigh on 30 years — as an FE lecturer, journalist, press officer and communications manager, working for City & Guilds, the much lamented Learning and Skills Development Agency and others.

During this time I have witnessed the birth and demise of many policy initiatives, quangos and qualifications, from YOPS, TOPS and YTS, to CPVE, E2E, the FEFC and the LSC.

Some were great ideas but fell foul of the whims of different secretaries of state. Others were half-baked and not thought through properly. And some were just plain daft.

Here are my favourites.

TVEI — The Technical Vocational Education Initiative (1983-97)
Full marks to whoever invented the title for the least catchy acronym and most garbled strapline.

As an FE lecturer in my first job I recall sitting in a seminar listening to people enthusing about TVEI wondering when we would actually get to see inside a television studio.

Fearful of sounding ignorant, it took several weeks for me to pluck up courage and ask someone to explain what TVEI was.

In short, the idea was to inject elements of vocational education into the 14 to 18 curriculum — apparently a dramatic departure from previous education policies at the time.

But as with many initiatives it floundered because of alleged tensions between government departments which were issuing contradictory messages.



Clockwise from above: Tony Blair was said to not be a fan of the Diploma of Vocational Education during his time as Prime Minister and it ended the same year as his time in Number 10; the Serious Fraud Office looked into the issue of franchising during the practice’s seven-year lifespan in the 1990s; and the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) for Lifelong Learning was one of the shorter-lived FE policies, lasting just two years. It was second only in Anne Nicholls’ list in terms of length of existence to the Individual Learning Account



As the National Curriculum gained momentum and the (then) Department for Education and Science flexed its muscles, TVEI faded away.

However, at a seminar organised by Pearson recently, there were hints that TVEI might make a comeback. Let’s hope they call it something else in case we think it’s all about television.

PICKUP — Professional and Commercial Updating Programme (1982-92)
The unfortunate acronym PICKUP made this initiative sound like an old dust cart.

It was a government-funded scheme that encouraged colleges (and universities as well) to provide courses for industry and businesses designed around their needs.

Funding was also made available for college lecturers to gain relevant experience outside education.

I took advantage of this by spending three months working on a magazine and then left to forge a new career in journalism and PR. I’ve never looked back.

What exactly happened to PICKUP is not clear. It probably suffered the same fate as other good ideas — running out of money and steam. But the mantra that colleges need to be more responsive to the needs of employers continues.

Franchising (1993-9)
Rewind back to the mid 1990s to a different

world when money was plentiful and colleges were being invited to set themselves ambitious expansion targets.

One way of expanding was through franchising — subcontracting to other providers and collecting public funding for courses that colleges sold to organisations such as local businesses.

But it all started to unravel when the Serious Fraud Office was brought in to investigate the misuse of public funds by some colleges, with allegations of “phantom students”.

A report in 1999 revealed that Halton College, in Cheshire, was unable to justify spending more than £6m of public money and accused staff of taking unnecessary expensive overseas trips.

One scam was claiming money for students on franchised courses based in Scotland, who were not eligible for funds from the English funding council.

Halton was not an isolated example. One school was said to be running courses for three colleges, using the same students and therefore getting triple payments.

But franchising, of course, is a perfectly acceptable way of operating. Many universities have sub-contracting arrangements with FE colleges to deliver their courses. But, since the scandals of the 1990s, lessons have been learned and the franchising option is no longer a gravy train.

Individual learning accounts (ILAs) (2000-1)
The idea behind the ILAs was to provide tax incentives and cash contributions to encourage individuals and employers to invest in learning — particularly in IT skills. Individuals were asked to put £25 of their own money into an account while the government provided £150. Sadly, these good intentions were open to abuse.

Some employers bought ILAs from corrupt learning providers and cashed them, knowing that no-one could check on whether learning had been delivered.

ILAs were a great idea that failed because they were open to abuse. There was some talk, in 2006, of reviving the ILAs but they seem to have dropped off the policy radar. Worth looking at again, maybe?

Key Skills (2000 -)
Functional Skills, Life Skills or Key Skills? They all do much the same thing — trying to get people up to a basic level of competency in literacy, numeracy, IT and being able to hold down a conversation without saying “Errrrr”.

While at the Learning and Skills Development Agency I observed the large amounts of money being pumped into providing training and resources for teachers.

The Key Skills qualification, along with Functional Skills, came under attack in the Wolf Report (2011) for being “very easy to pass” and serving the funding requirements

t of steam — remember any of them?

of providers rather than the needs of learners or employers.

The solution? Get everyone to study for GCSEs in maths and English — a bit like getting someone to keep on retaking their driving test when all they want to do is ride a bicycle. Thankfully, one or two people have realised the problem.

The Diploma of Vocational Education (2004-7)

After much cogitation and consultation, the Diploma was launched a decade ago as the definitive solution to the age-old debate about vocational-academic parity.

A-levels and GCSEs would remain, keeping the gold-standard pundits happy, but they would be encased in a building block-style framework where students could take vocational subjects as well.

To the pre-war generation it sounded like a revival of the old matriculation.

Huge efforts were put into developing materials and training programmes to get teachers ready for the Diploma, due to be phased in from 2008.

But sources in Whitehall hinted that it was running into problems with fears of a “two-tier system”.

The outcome? Apparently, my sources tell me it was Blair who rejected the Diplomas.

Was it a mistake? My view (and that of

some politicians) is that we could have got it right, but like many good ideas the Diplomas were not given enough time to bed in and became the victim of political whims.

Pearson’s crystal ball gazer (alias Steve Besley) has intimated that the Diploma might yet make a comeback.

The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) for Lifelong Learning (2006-8)

The what? Don’t worry if you’ve never heard of it. Hardly surprising as it lasted just two years (I worked for them for just a month), but then the average lifespan of a quango is only eight.

The QIA was formed out of the Learning and Skills Development Agency which had done an excellent job by combining policy and practice with a foot in both camps.

This meant they were able to understand the needs of teachers and policy makers. But the cry from Whitehall where contestability was the buzzword was “You can’t have an agency doing commissioning and delivery”. Errrrr, why not?

The idea behind the QIA was that it would do the commissioning and others would do the delivery. But after two years people realised that the organisation needed to be owned by the sector, not part of government.

So the QIA morphed into the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) which was

emphatically not a quango. Sadly, LSIS is no more either, having morphed (well, sort of) into the Education and Training Foundation.

The TechBacc (2014)

My final choice is a good example of a Groundhog Day initiative. As described on the City & Guilds website, the TechBacc (the Technical Baccalaureate) is “an entirely new professional programme designed to give 14 to 19-year-olds an exciting alternative path towards an apprenticeship, higher education or employment”.

It continues by explaining that the current education system is not adequately preparing young people for the world of work and that many of the current qualifications are old, tired and not relevant to today’s industry needs. Bravo.

But the TechBacc is not a new idea. Trawling through my memory (and the internet) I recall that City & Guilds launched a Technological Baccalaureate (note the slight difference in terminology) back in the 1990s.

It was developed jointly with something called the CTC (City Technology Colleges) Trust – another initiative that has faded into history.

The original TechBacc was designed to “achieve parity of status between academic and vocational qualifications”. Now where

have we heard that before?

Nevertheless, the current TechBacc sounds like an excellent initiative. Let’s hope that it’s given enough time to bed in without becoming a victim of short-termism.

So there we have it. Eight prime examples of ideas — some good and some flawed — that were launched with much gusto that have bitten the dust or morphed into something else. “They say that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. It would be madness to ignore the evidence of three decades of skills and employment policy — yet our politicians have failed to learn from the past,” said City & Guilds Chairman Sir John Armitt.

So perhaps when the next government launches a “new” initiative with a “vision” to bridge the academic-vocational divide or make qualifications more relevant to employers, instead of indulging in collective amnesia civil servants should delve through the archives ... or maybe just talk to a few people who’ve seen it all before.

Anne Nicholls is a writer and communications consultant specialising in education and training. The views expressed here are entirely her own, based on a personal perspective, with apologies for any inaccuracies.

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David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science

THE SUNDAY TIMES
festival OF EDUCATION
WELLINGTON COLLEGE
June 18-19, 2015

I HAVE RARELY, IF EVER, FELT SO EMPOWERED TO IMPROVE MY OWN TEACHING AND TO HELP OTHERS IMPROVE THEIRS. I HAVE JUST SPENT TWO DAYS AT THE SUNDAY TIMES FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION, AND IT WAS SIMPLY AMAZING

PROFILE



Historically
there's been
much less
research on FE
than there is
on schools and
universities



SETTING THE RESEARCH RECORD STRA

@REBECCAKCOONEY
REBECCA.COONEY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

They're questions that will have kept many others in the FE sector awake at night. They include how do you guarantee good quality vocational education? How do you measure success when there's no simple FE outcome measure? How are the steps to address low levels of literacy and numeracy working?

And then there's how do you equip people already in the workforce with said skills and how much of an impact does it have to get those skills later in life, as opposed to when they were younger?

And, as director of the new Centre for Vocational Education Research (CVER), it's going to be Sandra McNally's job to help answer them.

The centre, based at the London School of Economics (LSE), was launched in March to start filling the gaping hole in research into the sector.

As we sit in McNally's airy office in the LSE's buildings in Central London, I am struck by how mammoth the task facing her and her colleagues is.

"Historically there's been much less

research on FE than there is on schools and universities — there is some, but not as much really good research that gets published in really good places," she says.

"The data hasn't been as good either, but that is changing and we're accessing data for the first time — linking the individual pupil data base to the national records which has only just become available and we'll get even better data sets soon.

"One of our roles is to use that data ourselves to answer important research questions, and the other role is to try and get other people in the wider academic community to use the data and help facilitate that."

Softly-spoken McNally, aged 43, is someone who is clearly more comfortable talking about her work than herself.

"I'm quite private and introverted," she lets slip. But, she tells me, she's "well-suited" to research.

"I didn't decide to be an academic when I was young, but looking back I don't think it's terribly surprising that this is where I am," she says.

"I've always been somebody who's interested in research as well as current affairs and politics."

And while most people wouldn't connect those interests, McNally insists they're vital to each other.

"Because I'm working in such an applied area, education and skills, you can't do good work in that area without being clued into what's going on around you," she explains.

"You just have to be well informed and interested in what's going on or your research won't be very good."

McNally was born in Dublin, and describes her childhood as "a very happy life", with her parents John (a banker, who, McNally jokes, "retired a long time before the financial crisis") and Annajane as well as siblings Hugh and Jennifer.

Sadly, Annajane died from breast cancer in 1987, when McNally was 15.

"That was obviously very painful," says McNally.

"It does have an impact, losing a parent when you're young has a profound impact on you for the rest of your life — I miss her hugely."

"She was only 40, and at that time a lot of people died from breast cancer. At that time it was at its peak in Britain and Ireland.

"But now, although it's still as prevalent as it was the treatment has improved,

people don't die from it as often as they did back then."

At 18 McNally went to Trinity College Dublin to study economics before moving to London to study an MSC in environmental economics at UCL.

"I absolutely loved London," she says. "It was just so different from my life before that and it was the first time I became friends with people who weren't Irish.

"I lived in international halls and I had so many friends of different cultures and doing different things — I just thought London was a fantastic place."

After graduating, she found a job in Cambridgeshire at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology as an environmental economist.

Pretty soon however, she realised she was going to need to expand her research skills and started a PhD.

"Doing the PhD alongside my job was a challenge. Although my job was very related to what I was doing for my PhD so I think it really helped me do my job because before that, I wasn't highly skilled enough to be a really good researcher," she concedes.

"I was using the skills I was learning in



It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?

Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy. I like the character development of it — the main character is a portrayal of Tolstoy himself and I like that it tells you what he's thinking and the phases he goes through in his life

What do you do to switch off from work?

I read a lot and I like walking. And I watch TV miniseries — I'm watching Poldark at the moment and I love Downton Abbey and the Swedish ones like The Killing and The Bridge

What's your pet hate?

I don't like people who have long conversations on their phone on the train and speak twice as loud as they need to

If you could invite anyone, living or dead, to a dinner party, who would it be?

Seamus Heaney [Nobel Prize-winning Irish poet]

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

I went through various phases, but I wanted to be a journalist at school and ran the school magazine and it was great experience. I suppose some of the research I do now uses similar skills



Clockwise from top: from left: McNally's half-brother Mark, stepmother Jackie, father John, sister Jennifer, brother Hugh, baby nephew Will, aunt Margaret, McNally and her sister-in-law Gill, McNally with her father John last year, family photo from 1987 — from left: McNally, brother Hugh, sister Jennifer, father John and mother Annajane, from left: McNally's sister Jennifer, McNally and brother Hugh in 2013

college to do my work so it was a little bit like an apprenticeship — an unusual sort of apprenticeship.”

In 2001, McNally started her career in education research, when she moved to the LSE’s centre for economic performance and centre for the economics of education.

The move, she admits, was largely “opportunistic”.

“I really wanted to work in an environment where there was sort of a public policy issue and education just happened to come up,” she says.

“But working here is fantastic, the projects I was working on were really very interesting and gradually I came to know a lot about education in the UK.

“I think what I like about working in education is that as somebody who’s been through education yourself you can relate to a lot of the issues — that wasn’t the case when I was working in environment and agriculture where I didn’t really have much personal background of that although it was quite interesting.

“I do like the sense of focussing on a research area that I really believe is very important to try and improve things for people — that’s a very attractive part of it.”

McNally now splits her time between LSE and the University of Surrey, where she started teaching two years ago — the first time in her career she’d had any interaction with students.

“That was quite difficult, actually,” she says.

“It was quite a steep learning curve and it is very strange to see the university from that other perspective and to engage with other people is a very different thing.”

McNally’s father remarried, and now has two sons in his second marriage, Mark aged 17, and Stephen, 19.

“It’s funny, when I’m teaching all my students stats in Surrey I think they all look a little bit like Stephen and his friends,” she says.

But, she adds: “It’s been very good as well — it’s nice to engage with young people and be involved in teaching.

“And it’s affected my research because you have to know subjects so well in order to teach them, I feel it’s probably deepened my own knowledge of the areas that I’ve been teaching in and also extended my knowledge because I have to go into other areas of labour economics apart from education.”

“Losing a parent when you’re young has a profound impact on you for the rest of your life — I miss my mother hugely”

However, it looks like McNally will be scaling back her teaching to focus on the CVER, which will have be designing its first project at a steering group meeting in May — working out which of those earlier questions will be answered first.

“We’re hopefully going to be designing an interesting programme of research,” she says.

“Initially we’re looking around few main themes. Like what are the returns on vocational education for individuals and society more generally? How do you improve quality? And what’s good?

“What are the broad benefits and how can you improve careers advice through what is a very complicated system?

“That’s about where we’re starting at and that will evolve over time.”

So what does she hope will come of it?

“Really good quality academic research — but that’s very policy-relevant and very motivated by what’s important to the country,” she says.

“I’d like the research to facilitate better, evidence-based decision-making at policy level and thereby improve things for people, especially for young people coming through the system.”



FE INSIDER

Shane Chown is head of policy & public affairs at Niace and a governor at Westminster Kingsway College. He is also a former Institute for Learning policy officer and ex-vice president of the National Union of Students. His exclusive FE Insider column features in the first *FE Week* of every month.

What makes FE political

I read a blog the other day that talked about how there was so much political consensus around in our sector at the moment and how this was a ‘job done’ for the sector’s PR and lobbying efforts.

The evidence for this was a skills hustings event where representatives from the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats basically agreed with each other about everything.

After reading this blog, I found myself with a nagging feeling somewhere between disbelief and frustration.

So as the General Election campaign finally comes to an end and we gear up for a new parliament, now seems a good time to get this off my chest. Further and adult education is deeply, deeply political, if not, at times, party political, and we must not be lulled in to a false sense of security just because all parties say that apprenticeships are a good thing.

In hindsight, I think we have to learn lessons from the cut to funding for 18-year-olds last year, how the sector responded and why we were, ultimately, unsuccessful. And it’s the same with the 24 per cent cut announcement

An observed consensus like this might give the impression of party political consensus, but that says more about the quality of debate than anything else.

So how to raise the quality of that debate? To me it means being honest about the politics of further and adult education, given, the sound-bite to-ing and fro-ing of a General Election campaign in this climate often doesn’t lend itself to the ‘deep and meaningful’ kind of debate I’m arguing for.

But without it, as a sector, we run the risk of becoming complacent; accepting and

supporting government policies that we know in our hearts are not good enough.

Our sector has a proud history in political movements. Many FE colleges can trace their origins back to workers’ education and trade union movements. To this day they attract and educate working class learners in deprived communities, as well as migrants and, albeit in alarmingly and drastically declining numbers, older people.

So when our core constituency are mostly the poor and we view our collective mission to be about social justice, equality and society, then we become deeply ingrained in the politics affecting people’s lives.

We’re pretty well versed in reciting the social return on investment of FE but I think we can be better at talking about the difficulties and barriers people without advantage and privilege have to overcome in order to navigate through the education system.

The notion that someone can’t afford the fees to do a part-time course at a college for example is one that most people can grasp, but I think we can be much more real and honest about the other barriers we know that some of our learners come up against that students from wealthier backgrounds don’t.

In hindsight, I think we have to learn lessons from the cut to funding for 18-year-olds last year, how the sector responded and why we were, ultimately, unsuccessful. And it’s the same with the 24 per cent cut announcement.

Were we really vocal enough about the cumulative impacts that government cuts had already done to poor people’s life chances? Did we say enough about the disproportionate impacts on people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, older people or people with mental ill health, for example, and how by reducing the resource we have to provide education and training for a group with the odds already stacked against them?

I think this is really important if we want to improve the quality of policy in our sector. Policy-makers make all sorts of assumptions about the learners that you work with, their backgrounds, their social capital, and their access to support, which are probably wrong.

So next time there’s an opportunity to influence policy and there are potential impacts on access, retention, achievement, wellbeing or progression, let’s not be afraid to be honest about the politics of and its inherent inter-relationships with poverty and equality. Consensus isn’t always a good thing.



RUTH SPARKES

Managing director of marketing and education, media and PR agency EMPRA

There’s more to FE and skills on Twitter than apprenticeship vacancies

It’s more than five years since Ruth Sparkes first applied her FE and skills marketing knowledge to the sector’s use of Twitter — so what has changed since then?

I wrote my first article on colleges and Twitter in 2009, so I’m guessing that by now every college and independent learning provider (ILP) must be a member of the Twitterati.

Early Twitter adopters from ‘back in the day’ were Deeside, Havering, Regents and Sunderland colleges, and my then-own college, Cornwall.

We’ve all moved on. Six years later some colleges are using Twitter very effectively and creatively. They are properly communicating (that’s two-way engagement — not just spewing out their news), engaging, monitoring and evaluating.

Some colleges understand the value of Twitter and are using it professionally and carefully, as part of the marketing mix.

Some FE chief executives and principals now have their own Twitter accounts and are using them with varying degrees of success. There have been a few duds (these have been reported on in this very newspaper), but NewVic’s Eddie Playfair, Harlow College’s Karen Spencer and Milton Keynes College’s Dr Julie Mills are examples of welcome visitors to my Twitter feed.

We FE types still struggle a bit when it comes to writing in 140 characters — a principal’s PA recently told me that she didn’t have time to write succinctly.

But, is there really a right way to use Twitter, and what should colleges and ILPs be using it for?

Well, personally, I think there’s definitely a wrong way to use Twitter and I’m seeing it more and more. I believe this down to the pressures that FE is under to recruit the right ‘sort’ of student, and lots of ‘em.

My main gripe is the constant tweeting and retweeting of apprenticeship vacancies. FE providers are more than apprenticeships; it’s a major turnoff.

Case studies, news stories and informed comment about apprenticeships are far better topics of Twitter conversation than blurting out lists of apprenticeship vacancies. You should be allowing and encouraging your followers to properly engage, whether they’re in the market for an apprenticeship or not.

What is required is a grown-up social media strategy, aligned with your other marketing and communications activities.

Strategies ought to include identifying relevant issues and topics to stimulate conversation, debate and participation from your target communities and influencers.

The key to success online is to develop memorable and remarkable content that is relevant to those you are seeking to engage.

Your strategy should include analysis of relevant influencers and communities so you can build online relationships and achieve your campaign objectives.

Some FE chief executives and principals now have their own Twitter accounts and are using them with varying degrees of success

These days there are excellent tools to analyse what’s going on with your tweets. Twitter’s own analytics is very good, and it’s free. To check out what’s happening in your twittersphere, make sure you’re logged in to the Twitter account that you want to analyse then go to analytics.twitter.com.

Click on the “view all tweet activity” and it takes you to a 28-day overview. There’s a graph that gives you the total number of impressions you’ve received over the period, the number per day, and the daily average. This lets you instantly view trends.

You can work out the best times to tweet, what day of the week is best, whether your images and videos increase engagement. You can compare one sort of tweet with another.

Students, staff, parents, employers, schools, alumni — they’re all out there, and you need to keep them engaged and interested.

If you really must have this ‘roll’ of apprenticeship vacancies, why not set up a new, apprenticeship-specific Twitter account? Redcar & Cleveland College has done this, take a look: @Apprenticeinfo

FE providers should be projecting their personality using Twitter; communicating a sense of humour, expertise, passion and quality. You don’t want to be known as a Twitter bore.

Dame Asha Khemka issues an impassioned plea for FE and the benefits it can bring as the countdown to voting day nears its end.

There has been something quite worrying about the discourse in this General Election campaign.

Aside from the usual political point-scoring, we've seen something more sinister — an undercurrent of fear. Fear of the foreign, the stranger and the immigrant.

At a time when we need to be open to an ever-shrinking world and the opportunities international trade brings, we seem to be retrenching backwards into our small island.

People are afraid the stranger may take their job. They are sceptical about Europe, and worried about the impact of immigration on our already-stretched public services.

If we build a society based on strong employment, this anxiety will no longer exist. Instead of throwing rocks at the EU from the outside, let's try and change things from the inside. And by creating the capacity to invest more in services and infrastructure — and a culture that doesn't expect everything for free — people will feel less threatened by immigration.

It's time to inject a sense of positivity back into our great nation, regardless of where we're from, which side of a border we reside and where our political allegiances lay.

Our collective challenge is to create a country where opportunity flourishes and people can achieve their ambitions, no



DAME ASHA KHEMKA
Principal of West Nottinghamshire College Group

‘Our education system should be an enabler and not a blocker’

matter what their starting point.

Often it is easier for somebody from the outside to see the positives — and I believe the foundations are already in place.

We are an infinitely accepting and tolerant nation. I know, because this country and the people in it welcomed me and my family with open arms more than 35 years ago. Let's not allow the rhetoric of fear to change that.

Our country is one of promise and opportunity for those willing to seize it. I can testify to its life-enhancing opportunities. Let's work together to instill in the next generation a sense of hope and create a society where people are willing to invest in their education — because in gaining skills, they gain their futures.

We are a society where people can be themselves and, because of it, innovation thrives and creativity flourishes. Let's allow people to innovate, and have trust in those who work tirelessly in public service to put the interests of their communities first rather than meeting targets or quotas set from a distance.

Every day in my own college I see young people filled with hope and ambition, just like I was all those years ago.

I am a firm believer in allowing that ambition to flourish; in providing our young people with the skills and the personal tools to turn their dreams into reality.

Whether that is through apprenticeships or academic qualifications, our education system should be an enabler and not a blocker.

We start from the stand point that every single student has the potential to make a success of their lives and, in so doing, will go on to contribute to their communities

and society as a whole. Positivity breeds positivity.

Our nation is filled with people who want to make a difference. I know because some of those people have helped me along the way. That, in turn, has made me want to give something back. The more we push people to the outside, the less they feel part of

Rather than spending all our time trying to fix what isn't working, let's look at what does work and replicate that

society and the less they give back in return. Negativity breeds negativity.

We have many challenges ahead — on controlling our borders, on balancing the books and repairing our fractured society.

We cannot achieve any of this with a deficit model. Rather than spending all our time trying to fix what isn't working, let's look at what does work and replicate that. Let's learn from each other.

If there's anything my many years in the FE sector has taught me, it's that whatever our age, background or culture, we never stop learning.



BECOME A VOLUNTEER TEAM LEADER AT THE SKILLS SHOW

To apply for a volunteer team leader position, please complete the application form found at theskillsshow.com/volunteer



I absolutely loved working as a team leader at The Skills Show. It's such an awesome team to be part of. This was a perfect opportunity for me to gain hands-on experience actually working on the ground and making contacts for when I graduate next year. The people you meet and the experience you have are just unbelievable."

Sophie Bunker, volunteer team leader at The Skills Show in 2014



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CAMPUS ROUND-UP

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Famed Paralympian opens centre for disabled students



From left: Barnet mayor Hugh Rayner, principal David Byrne, David Burrowes MP, Barnet and Southgate College head of supported learning Charles Nelson, student Jaia Melvin-Gibbons, aged 19, Lady Grey-Thompson, Ann Zinkin, college governor and Patricia Ekechi, deputy mayor of Enfield

Britain's most decorated Paralympian Lady Tanni Grey-Thompson officially launched a new centre for learners with learning disabilities at Barnet and Southgate College.

The 11-time Paralympic gold medallist was given a tour of the facilities and also met with students who will be using the purpose-built centre.

Proceedings opened with a speech from Lady Grey-Thompson, who also unveiled a plaque marking the launch.

"The development is inspiring and inclusive and even life-changing, offering amazing support to the students to help them lead independent, active lives. I believe that every student there will have the opportunity to fulfil their potential," she said.

Facilities at the new centre include a hydrotherapy pool, sensory room, a range of specialist classrooms, sports hall, catering café, drama room, training flat, sensory and recreational garden.

Award-winning Joe over the 'technical wall'

Abury College student is building a successful career after claiming first prize in the Northwest Guild of Bricklayers competition.

Level-two bricklaying student Joe Higginson, aged 18, competed in the junior category of the annual contest held in Preston, where he was challenged to build a 'technical wall' in five hours.

He credited the college with helping him win the competition and said: "I have learnt a lot during my time here. I have always received great support from my tutors."

Construction tutor Andy Wales said: "Joe has made myself and the college very proud of his commitment and hard work on his studies."

"This has resulted in him gaining an apprenticeship with JS Serridge, a sub-contractor for Barratt Homes, which is a fantastic opportunity for him."

Cap: Joe Higginson holding his winners shield



Football frenzy as Walsall winners lift colleges' cup



From left: Winning team members Matthew Hurd, aged 17, Dean Degville, 18, Ryan Williams, 17, Stuart Foster, 19, Tom Hargroves, 18, Shaun Eldon, 20, James Beardsmore, 17, Jonathan Garratt, 18, Michael Gladstone, 23, Omar Myers, 23, and Ryan McNicol, 17

Walsall College's supported learning football team shot to victory at the Association of Colleges (AoC) National Sports Championships.

The team of 12 learners with a variety of disabilities had to win a regional round to qualify for the finals of the Football for Students with a Disability tournament, which was part of the AoC sports championships that took place in Bath.

They then finished ahead of sides

from Tyne Metropolitan College, in North Tyneside, Bridgwater College, in Somerset, Blackpool and the Fylde College, Lincoln College and Newham Sixth Form College, in London after winning four out of six matches and scoring 10 goals.

Their college's sports development co-ordinator Mark Howard said: "The team's commitment, desire and attitude have been fantastic and their performances were truly outstanding."



From left: Level two diploma in engineering student Gill Krymcevas, aged 18, Steve Scanlon, engineering lecturer, level two diploma in engineering student Luke Guy, 17, Kevin Twine, motorcycle lecturer, Mick Belt, engineering lecturer, Rik Tooley, engineering lecturer, Chris Hartley, motorcycle lecturer and Carl Lillywhite, motorcycle lecturer

Learners' balloon effort takes off

The sky was no limit for students and staff from the science, technology, engineering and maths (Stem) departments at Chichester College who launched a balloon into the stratosphere.

Armed with a "payload" of three cameras, a black box and seeds, the team released the high-altitude weather balloon as part of the Global Balloon Challenge, where winners can land prizes for highest altitude, best images, best videos and best team.

After several hours in the air the balloon, flying at about five metres per second, flew

over the New Forest before picking up the strengthening winds of the jet stream high in the stratosphere.

It then blew in a north-easterly direction before bursting — just when the team had predicted it would.

Andrew Chater, head of engineering at Chichester College, said: "With all equipment intact and with the data already looking impressive I think we can safely say that we have had a 100 per cent success rate for the mission."

Outdoor lecturers up the creek with a paddle



A team of Hampshire college outdoor lecturers paddled through their most gruelling challenge to date when they took on the world’s toughest canoe race in memory of former student James Male, a crew member of the Cheeki Rafeeki yacht lost at sea last year, writes Billy Camden.

Paddling non-stop for 125 miles from Devizes to Westminster was the most psychologically demanding test ever endured for a team of sport and outdoor education lecturers from Sparsholt College.

But with every stroke they had the memory of former outdoor education student James Male — a 22-year-old crew member of the Cheeki Rafeeki yacht lost at sea last year — spurring them on right up to the finish line.

“James is remembered very fondly by the team. We wanted to show our support by giving something back and felt this challenge would be a fitting tribute to an adventurous young man with a great passion for the outdoors, in particular water sports,” said Scott Fancourt, who led the team of lecturers.

Scott was joined by Lawrence Blair, Gareth Rogers and Kaj Berendsen as they took on the gruelling DW2015 challenge, dubbed the world’s toughest canoe race,



The Sparsholt College lecturers who took on the Devizes to Westminster canoe race. From left: Lawrence Blair, Scott Fancourt, Gareth Rogers and Kaj Berendsen



The team during the DQ2015 canoe race. White boat: Scott Fancourt (back) and Lawrence Blair (front). Red boat: Kaj Berendsen (back) and Gareth Rogers (front)

to raise funds for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution Forever by the Seas Fund, set up in memory of the Cheeki Rafiki crew.

The team participated in the senior doubles category after training for six months — on water as well as using a paddle machine in the college gym.

“It was tough, really tough. But it did go well,” said Lawrence.

“Although it is extremely physically draining and painful the toughest bit is the

mental aspect especially once you get to three or four o’clock in the morning when it is dark and you’ve been in it for quite a few hours.”

They travelled along the Kennet and Avon Canal to Reading, and then the River Thames to Teddington before coming across the most testing part of the route, the 17-mile tidal portion.

“The toughest bit is getting to where the Thames goes tidal in time because if you don’t hit the tide right you would never paddle against it,” said Lawrence.

“You are still 17 miles from the end but

your whole race up to this point has been about getting to Teddington on time and in your mind you still haven’t registered how much you have left to go.”

But they did reach finish line and in a time of 23 hours, 23 minutes and 23 seconds — finishing in a respectable 44th position out of 118.

And as the team glided to dry land they were met by the proud faces of James’s mum, Lorraine, and dad, Graham.

“We were absolutely amazed at what they have achieved,” said Graham. “Originally we intended just to see them off from Devizes but ended up following them all the way to Westminster, being so inspired by what they were doing.”

He added: “James would have loved to have done this challenge himself and would be so proud of them.”

The team managed to raise more than £2,500, which will be added to the £13,000 pot already raised by James’ family. Visit <http://bit.ly/1KtAMQq> to donate.



James Male

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& MOVERS SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving

Former East Kent College vice principal Dr Andrew Gower has taken over the top job at South London's Morley College.

His appointment follows the announcement last year of former principal Ela Piotrowska's retirement.

Dr Gower began his career leading and teaching courses in music technology at Canterbury College and Kingston University. In 2002 he was appointed as a senior lecturer in music at Canterbury Christ Church, specialising in electroacoustic composition and studio production. Between 2007 and 2011 he was director of Canterbury Christ Church University's Broadstairs Campus.

"I am delighted to join Morley College and to become part of this exciting learning community. During this 125th anniversary year since Morley was founded we continue to celebrate the many successes of the past while now creating our future," he said.

"I very much look forward to working with students, staff and governors, with partners in Lambeth and Southwark, and our many stakeholders, to consolidate and develop the college's inspirational opportunities for adult

learning that are transformative, both for the individual and the communities within which they live and work."

Morley College governors' chair Peter Davies told *FE Week*: "The governors are delighted to welcome Andrew as their new principal. His varied FE and higher education background will bring a different and fresh perspective to the college and help shape its future direction.

"Equally, he is clearly passionate about learning, has a personal interest in music and the arts and will, I am sure, be another powerful advocate and champion for the importance and value of adult education in the round.

"These remain challenges times for adult education, but governors are looking forward to working with Andrew as we develop Morley's strategic plan for the next few years and ensure that Morley remains at the forefront of adult learning in all its guises."

Mr Davies also paid tribute to the work carried out by Ms Piotrowska, a former inspector for Ofsted, the Adult Learning Inspectorate and also the Further Education



Andrew Gower



Ela Piotrowska



Shobha Tynan

Funding Council.

"I first met Ela in 2008 when she took over as principal at Morley and I was principal at City Lit," he said. "I guess coming from Ofsted, she was also gamekeeper-turned-poacher, but her inspection background certainly helped her identify very quickly where Morley had to change.

"Indeed, with her professionalism, hard work and true dedication, Morley has come a long way and she can be rightly proud of everything she has achieved, while ensuring the college retained its traditional commitment to adult education, the community and of course the arts."

Meanwhile, former mechanical engineer Shobha Tynan, ex-assistant head at Ashbourne's Queen Elizabeth Grammar

School, has been appointed vice principal designate at Derby Manufacturing University Technical College, which is due to open in September 2015.

She said: "I am passionate about retaining and expanding the manufacturing industry in Derby and the East Midlands and it is vital that we produce skilled engineers in order for the region to build its manufacturing capability."

Principal Philip Morris said: "Shobha's engineering background and more than 20 years' experience in education makes her the perfect person for the vice principal role at the UTC."

Construction work is progressing on the £8m new purpose-built UTC campus on Pride Park, due to be completed by August.

To let us know of any new faces at the top of your college, independent learning provider, awarding organisation or other sector body email news@feweek.co.uk

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Abingdon and Witney College is an ambitious and proactive College that has an innovative, inclusive and respectful culture. With the retirement of the current Principal, Teresa Kelly, the Board of Governors is looking to appoint a visionary and dynamic successor.

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& Witney
College**

PRINCIPAL

Salary £125,000

As the leader of one of the highest performing and successful colleges in England, the new Principal will inherit a vibrant, financially sound and confident college with a clear sense of purpose and a mission to ensure that all of its students excel.

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The new Principal will have proven ability of senior leadership in a complex and challenging sector. Dedicated to delivering outstanding student success and confident to foster evolutionary change, the successful candidate will be able to lead the college through to its next phase of development.



Closing Date: Midday on 22nd May

Final selection: Will be held at the college on 15th and 16th June

More information on the post and how to apply can be found on our website: www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk/principalappointment

For a confidential discussion please call our external adviser, Marilyn Hawkins on 07973 492195 or email marilynehawkins@gmail.com

Head of Construction and Motor Vehicle

Salary Negotiable

Ref: E1353 Site: Derby College Roundhouse Campus



Our education group includes; a Further Education College, supporting over 25,000 learners per year across four state of the art campuses, a Multi-Academy Trust with a rapidly improving Academy (aged 11-19) and also one of the partners in Derby City’s imminent UTC along with employers including Rolls-Royce and Toyota.

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a Head of Construction and Motor Vehicle. You will lead and manage the Construction and Motor Vehicle departments, providing effective organisation and management of staff to ensure that learners studying within the curriculum have a high quality learning experience.

The successful candidate must have experience of successful curriculum development, excellent leadership and organisational skills as well as effective communication skills. You will work in close liaison with the Vice Principal Learner Journey, Inclusion and Vocational Curriculum to enhance the current curriculum in line with industry requirements as well as creating commercial income opportunities.

Experience in managing budgets with the ability to promote and implement active and flexible learning programmes is

essential. Links to industry with networking opportunities would be desirable.

A Level 5 teaching qualification is required for this post, in addition to a relevant vocational qualification in Construction or Building Services.

For an informal discussion about the post please contact Anita Straffon, Vice Principal Learner Journey, Inclusion and Vocational Curriculum on **0300 123 7890 ext: 3494** or email **anita.straffon@derby-college.ac.uk**

Closing Date: **Monday 18 May 2015**

For further details and to apply, please visit the job vacancies section of our website at **www.derby-college.ac.uk**



Engineering Opportunities in North Lincolnshire

North Lincolnshire has a proud tradition in Engineering and Manufacturing and this has provided a firm foundation for some exciting developments, particularly around Renewable Energy with thousands of jobs being created over the next few years. To provide the Engineers, Technicians and Crafts people required by both existing and new employers an investment of over £22m has been made in providing industry standard facilities and equipment. Central to this is the new Engineering and Technology Centre at North Lindsey College, a brand new University Technical College, an Apprentice Training Centre based at Tata Steel and the University Centre at North Lindsey College.

To ensure that we maximise this investment we are looking to recruit high quality, dynamic teachers, lecturers, facilitators and assessors as well as a Head of Engineering to lead these developments.

If you are an existing Lecturer/Teacher or interested in a career in training and education we would love to hear from you. We’re particularly looking for electrical, mechanical, fabrication and welding skills and can provide full teacher training for suitable candidates.

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North Lindsey College:	Humber UTC:	Apprentice Centre – Tata Steel:	North Lindsey College University Centre:
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Lecturers Salary: £22,201 – £29,926 (Post No: 1524)	Lecturers Salary: £22,201 – £29,926 (Post No: 1523)		Lecturers Salary: £29,845 – £33,597 (Post No: 1525)

* plus additional points based on experience

A market forces payment may be applicable for certain roles.
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For further details please visit **www.northlindsey.ac.uk**

Applications should be received by 4pm on **Thursday, 14th May 2015**





Principal & Chief Executive

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Our vision at Tameside College is to transform lives by offering first class education and training in order to improve employability and generate economic prosperity. We strive to place ourselves at the heart of our local community and deliver exceptional outcomes for our apprentices and work place learners, but there is still work to be done.

Following the announcement of Peter Ryder's intention to retire, we are seeking to appoint a new Principal & Chief Executive to lead us through the next exciting phases of our development. Our strong financial position is allowing us to embark on an ambitious development of our estate, including new builds and significant redevelopment of our current sites. This will provide state of the art facilities to deliver excellent learning opportunities for our local community and beyond.

Our new Principal will deliver outstanding leadership to help guide us through a period of significant change for the College and Further Education sector. The person appointed will demonstrate their skills as an experienced leader through their ability, creativity and business acumen and will inspire our dedicated staff and learners to achieve even greater success.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a dynamic individual who is dedicated to focussing on success for all of our learners.

The closing date for applications is 12pm on 22nd May 2015. Interviews will be held on Wednesday 24th and Thursday 25th June 2015.

To discuss the role in further detail and to request an application pack, please contact Helen Anderson: handerson@protocol.co.uk or 0115 911 1117, or visit www.protocol.co.uk/tameside for further information about this post.

Protocol

Excellence in FE

We are looking for a dynamic, self-motivated Access Adviser to support providers in development and review of the Open College Network West Midlands Access to HE Diplomas and AVA accreditation processes



The post holder will contribute to the continual improvement of AVA systems and processes and compliance with external regulatory requirements. The post is full-time and is office based although you will be required to travel frequently across the Open College Network West Midlands area of operation and nationally

Reporting directly to the Head of Access and Quality you will be required to:

- Work as part of the Access and Compliance Team and contribute to the effective operation of that Team
- Provide advice and guidance in relation to curriculum development and accreditation to centres offering Access to HE provision
- Contribute to the development, review and quality monitoring of AVA Diplomas

You will be qualified to level 5 or above or have significant relevant experience and possess:

- An understanding of Access to Higher Education provision
- Proven ability to support and facilitate innovative credit based curriculum design

- An understanding of cross sector post 16 education and lifelong learning
- Knowledge of Awarding Body and regulatory structures as they relate to Access to Higher Education
- Appropriate ICT skills
- Proven ability of initiating and maintaining working relationships

West Midlands Open College Network is an Awarding Organisation (AO) licensed by Ofqual and the QAA. We have a large modern office in Wolverhampton with outstanding facilities and free car parking. As the post holder you will have:

- Competitive salary
- The provision of appropriate ICT equipment including laptop / netbook and mobile phone as required
- Generous annual leave allowance
- Pension provision

If you are interested in this position then in the first instance contact Val Taylor, Director of Corporate Services - email: v.taylor@opencollnet.org.uk. Tel: 01902 624230

The closing date is Wednesday 20 May 2015 and interviews will be held on Friday 12 June 2015



“Are you ready...?”

ITS Group - A leading Education & Training Organisation based in South Yorkshire
...where our people are our success.

Are you ready for your next challenge? Are you ready to be responsible for your own success? Are you ready to work as a team member to make a difference?

Then you may be ready to join us at the ITS Group. Our growth plans are ambitious and we are looking for talented people to join our talented team to create a bright future.

We are strengthening our team with the following new roles; let us know if you are ready?

Trustee (Board Member)

RE: ITS/Trustee0

Remuneration: (0) Voluntary with paid business expenses

Role: Direct and Develop our strategic vision, working alongside our executive to ensure the health and wellbeing of ITS Group and its students/learners is paramount.

Person: An experienced & successful business entrepreneur preferable with a sales and marketing background.

Careers Advisor (New Student/Learner Engagement)

RE: ITS/Careers3

Remuneration: (C) c. £17,500 - £22,000 pa + benefits

Role: Encourage and Engage new students/learners offering personalised learning and career opportunities, raising aspirations and changing lives.

Person: An experienced and successful student/learner centric IAG specialist.

Sales Manager (New Business Sales)

RE: ITS/Sales1

Remuneration: (D) Basic Salary c. £24,000 - £28,000 pa + OTE + car + benefits

Role: Seek and Secure new business sales' opportunities with local, regional and national employers offering workforce development solutions.

Person: An experience & successful, self motivated, B2C sales person.

SEND Coordinator (Specialist Tutor)

RE: ITS/SEND4

Remuneration: (D) c. £22,000 - £26,000 pa, plus benefits

Role: Educate and Enable our students/learners who require an advanced programme of education and personal development to achieve their personal goals.

Person: An experienced successful, inspirational special educational needs tutor.

Marketing Manager (New Market Growth)

RE: ITS/Market2

Remuneration: (D) c. £24,000 - £28,000 pa + benefits

Role: Drive and Develop new market and growth opportunities responding to local, regional and national skills needs.

Person: An experienced & successful customer-orientated, influential market growth specialist.

Assistant Tutor (Learner Centric)

RE: ITS/PCare5

Remuneration: (B) c. £14,500 - £17,500 pa, plus benefits

Role: Support and Serve our students/learners with compassion and trust to enhance learning and achievement.

Person: An experienced successful and dedicated assistant tutor.

To Apply: Please visit our main website www.ind-training.co.uk/work-with-us/ and use our online application process, complete with more information about each role and application forms or call us on **01226 295471**.

We particularly welcome applications from applicants of all cultural backgrounds who are currently under-represented in our workforce. Disabled applicants who meet the essential short listing requirements will be guaranteed an interview.

ITS Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS.

**No agencies, thank you.*



Executive Dean: Higher Education

Salary: £75k + attractive benefits



'Build our future in higher education!'

Blackburn College is one of the largest and most progressive providers of high quality higher education in the colleges' sector. We have 16000 students, of whom 3000 are in higher education across a range of programmes, and provide an outstanding student experience. Central to our success is institutional agility and visionary leadership. The relevance of our curriculum to employers and its delivery are key features of our distinctive offer in higher education, along with our state-of-the-art University Centre and the calibre and commitment of our academic staff. Our recent QAA HE Review highlighted these features.

Blackburn College will continue to remain at the leading edge of higher education in colleges. We will respond creatively to scheduled policy shifts and the new emphasis on higher order skills for employment and vocational and professional programmes.

We will continue to grow in the higher education market and our curriculum offer will be central to our profile. Equally, we will sustain the continuous enhancement of our research, scholarship and professional practice.

The Executive Dean will have a pivotal role in strategic and operational performance and development, enabling the college to position itself appropriately. He/she will provide dynamic academic leadership across our higher education programmes, recognising the opportunities and implications for the college. Curriculum development will underwrite our competitiveness: and the high quality of our learning and teaching will enhance the college's reputation.

We are looking to appoint an outstanding individual who is motivated by the new vocational agenda and, in this context, will lead curriculum innovation and the further development of learning and teaching.

If this brief interests and excites you, then please access the Candidate Pack at www.blackburn.ac.uk/jobs/ Potential candidates are encouraged to have a discussion with our retained consultant, Professor Bill Wardle at bill@billwardle.com or 07777642100.

Completed applications should be sent to jobs@blackburn.ac.uk.

Closing date for applications is 12 noon 11 May 2015 and Interviews are scheduled for 1 June 2015.



Middlesbrough College are seeking inspirational lecturing professionals

Whether you are a graduate, new to the profession, or someone with teaching experience we would like to hear from you.

Permanent Lecturing Opportunities in:

Biochemistry • History • Photography • Psychology • Geography • GCSE English • GCSE Maths

Middlesbrough College has an excellent pay and non-pay benefits package including:

- Occupational Pension Schemes
- 45 days annual holiday (dependent on contract) plus statutory holidays
- Career and progression routes operate within the Lecturers salary banding (£23,934 - £34,140)
- Access to an excellent Workforce Development Programme
- Staff well-being initiatives
- Family Friendly Policies
- Excellent staff facilities including Fitness Studio, Restaurant, Cafés, Hair & Beauty Salons

Middlesbrough College is an ambitious College with a strategy to expand its offering and investment in its campus. MC6 is a purpose-built Sixth Form Centre which provides students with a fantastic learning space. This modern and technologically advanced facility represents an important development in A Level provision in the region.

**Applications by CV to recruitment@mbro.ac.uk
no later than 12 noon, Monday 11th May 2015
For any further information call: 01642 333666**

www.mbro.ac.uk

Middlesbrough College, Dock Street, Middlesbrough TS2 1AD



Middlesbrough College is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

Grimsby Institute Group

Inspiring, Innovative and Outstanding?

If you think you are all of the above then you may be interested in some of the exciting job opportunities we have available. We are the main provider of post-sixteen education in North East Lincolnshire and the surrounding area, our turnover is £48.9million and we continue to go from strength-to-strength.

Over the last few years we have invested in a £20m University Centre, £4m Sports Centre and a £6m Arts Centre and, as part of refocusing our curriculum and our exciting plans for the future, we have the following posts available:

Application closing date 22nd May 2015
Salary per annum £34,683-£36,724

- Curriculum Manager (Building Services Engineering)
- Curriculum Manager (Manufacturing Engineering)
- Curriculum Manager (Mechanical & Electrical Engineering)
- Curriculum Manager (Automotive Engineering)
- Curriculum Manager (HE Education & Social Science)
- Curriculum Manager (HE Health & Care Industries)
- Curriculum Manager (Business & Visitor Economy)
- Curriculum Manager (HE Business)
- Curriculum Manager (14-16 and LLDD)

- Curriculum Manager (Community Learning)
- Curriculum Manager (Maths)
- Curriculum Manager (English)
- Curriculum Manager (Lincolnshire Rural Activity Centre & Lincolnshire Regional College)
- Curriculum Manager (Digital Computing & Games)
- Curriculum Manager (Visual Arts)
- Curriculum Manager (Media)
- Curriculum Manager (Music & Performing Arts)
- Salary per annum £22,000
- Curriculum Co-ordinator (Distance Learning)



University Centre
Grimsby

Full details can be found at
www.latestvacancies.com/grimsby

IT ALL ADDS UP

MATHS TEACHER TRAINING JOB VACANCY

Exciting opportunity for a talented graduate with a mathematics or related degree (STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) to teach maths in the FE sector.
APPLY NOW! Closing date 22 June '15



Great People, Great Place

You may be about to graduate or be looking to retrain to follow a new career path. You need enthusiasm and drive for education, good ICT skills, effective English language skills (spoken and written) and the ability to work as part of a professional teaching team.

WHAT WE OFFER YOU:

- Bursary available up to £25,000.
- Guaranteed teaching hours for the PGCE.
- Comprehensive & supported induction.
- Opportunity to work alongside experienced FE tutors in the delivery of Functional Skills, GCSE and Core maths.
- A mentor to help you develop your teaching, learning and assessment skills.
- Involvement in the College Early Adopters Core maths project in partnership with Selby College which enables wider peer support and development opportunities.
- Guaranteed job interview with Shipleigh College and a reference on completion of your training.
- Financial incentives at the end of programme if you continue your teaching career. For more information go to www.feAdvice.org.uk

Closing date: 22 June '15
Interview date: 29 June '15
Start date: September '15

"I have enjoyed it here, the variety of levels was a challenge but also very rewarding." - Mark, current maths trainee teacher

For more information and an application form please go to the Shipleigh College jobs page at www.shipleigh.ac.uk or call 01274 327395.



FE Week

FE Week : The only newspaper dedicated to further education and skills

TO PLACE YOUR NEXT RECRUITMENT ADVERT WITH FE WEEK, CONTACT HANNAH ON 020 81234 778

Brooklands College

Lecturer in Functional Skills (September start)

Salary: up to £33,071.28 per annum
(depending on qualifications and experience)

We are seeking to appoint an inspirational teacher who can deliver and maintain high standards and create a positive learning environment for students studying Functional Skills in English and Mathematics up to level 2.

The successful candidate must have a relevant professional level 4 qualification, and a teaching qualification. He/she must be an excellent communicator, be able to work effectively as part of a team and be skilled in the use of IT. An Assessor's award would be desirable.

Benefits include: 47 days annual leave, final salary pension scheme, car parking, refectory.

Close Date: 15th May 2015



For further details and an application form, contact the HR Department by email hr@brooklands.ac.uk, or via our website www.brooklands.ac.uk

www.brooklands.ac.uk

Lecturer in GCSE Maths

Blackpool
£24,162 to £28,843



Blackpool and The Fylde College is one of the UK's leading Further Education colleges. Our reputation for excellence has developed through professionalism and passion for learning, helped by talented staff, outstanding resources and massive commitment to learner support. An excellent opportunity has now arisen for Lecturer in GCSE Maths to join the college.

As Lecturer, you will assist in the development and delivery of the managed learning of students.

Whilst being fully conversant with course regulations and specifications for the defined area thus ensuring conformity and best practice, you will assist with securing quality improvement within the School as well as assisting with monitoring student recruitment, retention and achievement and taking remedial action where necessary.

The successful candidate will possess a recognised teaching qualification (minimum level 5) or will be willing to commence within 1 year of appointment. You will hold GCSE at grade C or above in English and Maths (or be willing to obtain within 2 years of appointment) coupled with a degree or equivalent qualification in the relevant discipline with a mathematical context.

Industrial/commercial experience coupled with experience in a Further Education environment is also essential. Experience in a Higher Education environment would be desirable.

We look forward to receiving your application

Closing date: 12noon, 11th May 2015

To apply www.blackpool.ac.uk/jobs

E: jobs@blackpool.ac.uk

T: 01253 504173



LECTURERS MATHS OR ENGLISH

Lecturer English – full time / fractional

Post No: LB026

Lecturer Maths – full time / fractional

Post No: LB027

Salary up to £36,427 per annum, pro rata where appropriate

Hourly paid – English

Post No: E/05/15

Hourly paid – Maths

Post No: M/05/15

Hourly rate £23.49 per hour

Solihull College are seeking teachers with a passion for Maths and English, to add to our talented pool of full time, fractional and part time hourly paid teachers of English and Maths.

We are interested to hear from people with a passion for enabling young people and adults to achieve at GCSE and / or Functional Skills in English or Maths. Prior experience in teaching these areas is preferable but more than that, we seek individuals with the ability to engage students in these subjects, make learning accessible and enjoyable, and go the extra mile to enable a diverse range of students to achieve.

The College is a fantastic place to work. We have a strong English and Maths team who actively share good practice and are committed to continual improvement. Support and on-going professional development are a significant part of our work with all English and Maths teachers. Teaching and learning in English and Maths is a real strength.

If you are passionate about English and Maths, confident in your ability to engage a range of students in learning and ready to contribute to our success, there has never been a better time to join Solihull College. You will need to hold or be prepared to work towards a relevant teaching qualification.

Closing date of 17th May 2015



Teacher of Maths (Part time)

£21,684p.a. - £37,008 p.a. (pro rata, dependent on experience)

We are seeking a talented, enthusiastic and committed individual to teach in this thriving subject area.

We are an open access sixth form college with over 1000 16-18 year olds. The college has a strong track record of success and enjoys a good reputation in the local community. Scarborough itself offers an attractive coast line and beaches and is situated on the edge of the North York Moors, within easy reach of York.

Closing Date 10am Monday 11 May 2015

Information packs are available to download from www.s6f.org.uk or contact reception on 01723 365032



www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk

English and Maths Associate Tutors

We are currently recruiting for English & Maths Associate Tutors across the country

Associate Title: Maths and English Associate Tutors

Location: National (Field Based)

Working Hours: Part Time

Overall Purpose of Job:

Associate Tutors in Maths and English are required to deliver a range of qualifications from Entry Level 2 to Level 2 within our flexible learning portfolio offer. All qualifications are nationally accredited and include unit awards, Level 1 certificates and full functional skills up to Level 2.


Skills and Qualifications Required:

- Self-managing and flexible in your working approach
- Highly motivated and innovative
- Passionate about Maths and/or English and experienced at delivering distance learning packages
- Experience teaching and assessing in their subject area in a post-16 environment
- Good IT skills
- Full driving licence and willing to travel as required
- Able to pay own tax and National Insurance

Additionally, an ideal candidate would also hold a degree and a teaching qualification.

Interested in applying?

For more information or to apply please contact: hr@learningcurvegroup.co.uk or call: **01388 777129**



Opportunity within Offender Learning – Teacher in English

Location: HMYOI Cookham Wood

Salary Range: £23,073.70 - £28,213.34 (Subject to job evaluation)

Closing date for applications: 14th May 2015

Interview date: 18th/19th May 2015

Have you ever considered working with offenders? Do you want to work in an environment where you can really make a difference?

The Manchester College are looking to recruit a full-time Teacher in English to be based at HMYOI Cookham Wood in Rochester. The successful candidate will develop and teach high quality, learner focused education, under the guidance of the curriculum manager. This is an exciting opportunity to work within the rewarding area of Offender Learning.

About the College

The Manchester College Group deliver learning and skills in over 60 sites within Her Majesty’s Prisons, private sector prisons, Approved Premises and the community. Working closely with stakeholders, they aim to provide locally determined, high quality provision which meets the needs and interests of learners.

HMYOI Cookham Wood houses sentenced and remanded young offenders (boys only) aged 15-18 years old. The curriculum delivered on site is broad and fully accredited with pathways in academia, vocational and personal development whilst being fully supported by an integrated SEN provision.

In return for your dedication, as an employee of The Manchester College Group, you will be rewarded with:


- Generous holidays (increases on service)
- Fantastic pension scheme
- Extensive training and development
- Simply health scheme
- And many more...

If you are interested in being considered for the vacancy, please send a copy of an up to date CV to apply@r21media.co.uk

TEACHER OF ENGLISH

Part-time (0.8 fte), Permanent

£21,684 - £37,008 pro rata (including PSP per annum)



We are seeking to appoint a successful Teacher with experience of delivering good and outstanding lessons, and the ability to motivate and inspire students to reach their potential and exceed expectations. You will be expected to demonstrate your commitment to excellence and inclusion at all times, ensuring that the experience of students is the best it can be.

You will be responsible for delivering AS/A2 courses, and a GCSE re-sit course, to students by providing excellent learning opportunities and effective and enthusiastic teaching. In addition you will be involved in curriculum planning and development, and support the Curriculum Manager in ensuring continuous quality improvement within the subject.

With a full teaching qualification and expertise in this curriculum area, you will have a passion for the subject, proven success of delivery on Level 3 programmes and positive approach to continued improvement, teamwork and sharing of good practice.

We are a Sixth Form College with a diverse student community. 25% of our current students are from black or minority ethnic backgrounds and we are committed to constantly adapting our approach to meet the needs of all our learners. The successful candidate must have a

commitment to high standards and hard work to secure high quality outcomes for all students, and be able to interact effectively with students of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. We particularly welcome applications from black and minority ethnic candidates as they are under-represented within our teaching staff.

The College is committed to the Children’s Act and all successful appointments will be subject to Barred List (formerly List 99) and DBS (formerly CRB) clearance.

This vacancy is only open to candidates who are eligible/have the right to work in the UK. Original documentation will be required as evidence.

Unfortunately, we do not accept CV’s. To apply for this vacancy please follow this link www.hirewire.co.uk/FE/1053050/MS_JobDetails.aspx?JobId=61199, visit our website bilborough.ac.uk (towards the bottom of the home page ‘Other Links’, ‘Job Vacancies’), email sharon.belfitt@bilborough.ac.uk, or call **0115 851 5861**. To request an application form in an alternative format, please contact the HR Assistant on the same number.



City & Guilds

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BECAUSE WE NEED THEM

UP AND RUNNING

NOT JUST UP AND COMING

IT TAKES TECHBAC

The City & Guilds TechBac has been designed in partnership with employers, to equip young people with the professional and technical skills they need to confidently enter the world of work and stand out from the crowd.

DISCOVER WHY IT TAKES TECHBAC AT TECHBAC.COM

FE Week **Sudoku challenge**

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Spot the difference
to WIN an FE Week mug



		6	4		5			
4	2		8			6		
	8	3						
	9				8			5
		4				2		
3			1				4	
						1	2	
		8			2		6	7
			3		7	8		

Difficulty:
EASY

3				1	4			
		8						3
	4				3		7	5
	2	3		7		8		
		5		8		7	9	
2	3		1				4	
6						5		
			9	6				8

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

Last Week's solutions

7	8	5	2	4	1	3	6	9
6	4	2	8	3	9	7	1	5
9	1	3	6	7	5	4	2	8
3	7	1	9	8	6	2	5	4
5	9	8	4	1	2	6	7	3
2	6	4	3	5	7	9	8	1
4	5	6	7	9	8	1	3	2
1	3	7	5	2	4	8	9	6
8	2	9	1	6	3	5	4	7

Difficulty:
EASY

1	5	2	4	8	7	9	6	3
7	8	6	2	9	3	4	1	5
9	4	3	5	6	1	2	8	7
2	1	4	8	5	6	3	7	9
3	9	7	1	2	4	8	5	6
8	6	5	3	7	9	1	4	2
5	3	1	7	4	2	6	9	8
4	7	9	6	3	8	5	2	1
6	2	8	9	1	5	7	3	4

Difficulty:
MEDIUM



Spot five differences. First correct entry wins an FE Week mug. Text your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to 07969 166 374.
Last week's spot the difference winner was Lesley Valentine (pictured right), head of management information systems at Luton Sixth Form College.

